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MACLEAN'S

DOUBLE ISSUE

SEPT. 11th 2006

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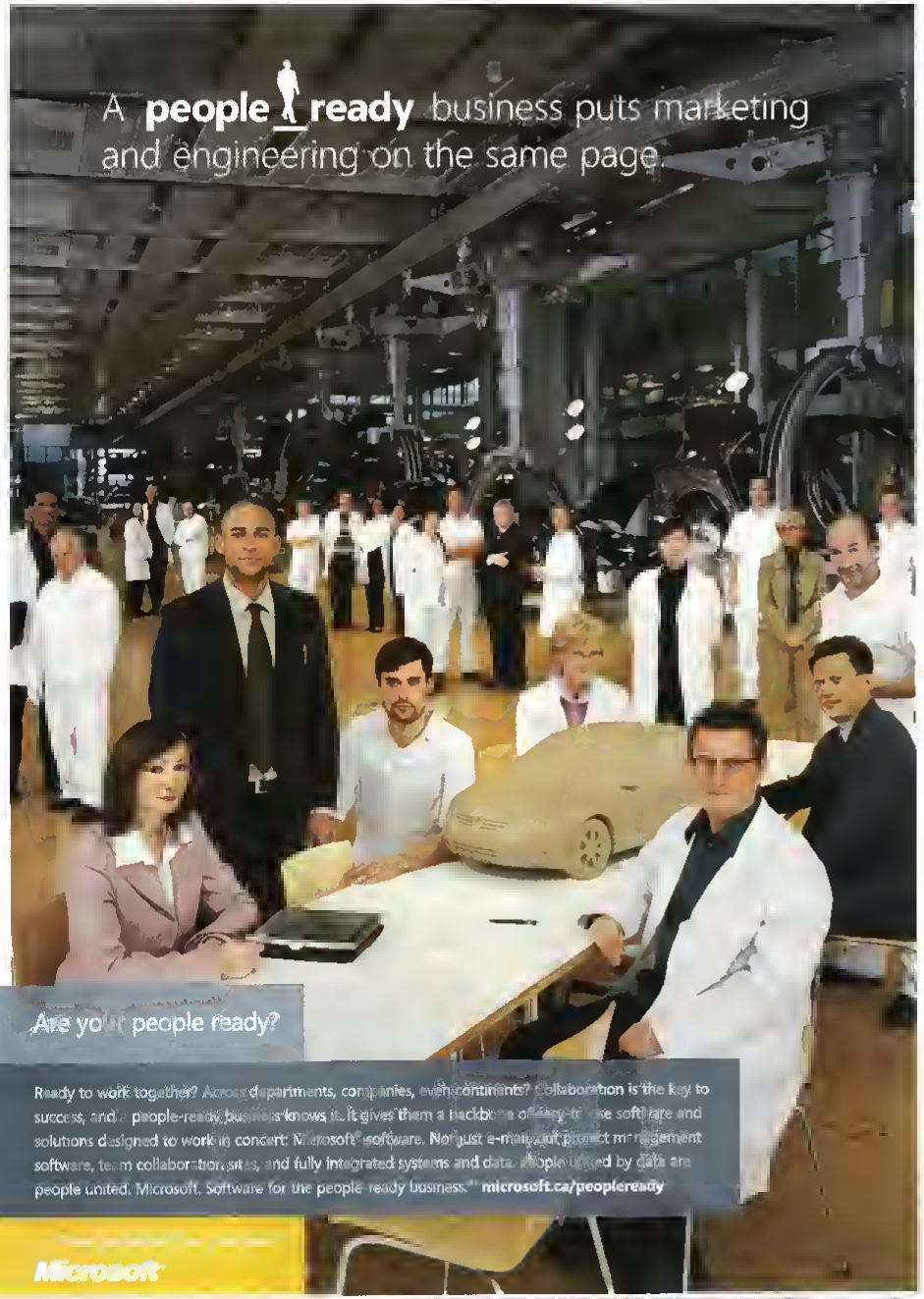
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EVERY UNIVERSITY will be ranked on Nov. 2. Even President David Naylor's U of T.

Information, please

Over the last several weeks, a small gang of university presidents has noisily announced that it will not co-operate with the annual *Maclean's* University Rankings (coming Nov. 2) on the grounds that the information presented in the magazine is "oversimplified," "arbitrary," and "of questionable validity." We have now had time to digest their comments. We have carefully weighed their arguments and assessed their evidence, and after due deliberation we have come to the conclusion that their complaints are oversimplified, arbitrary, and of questionable validity.

First of all, the *Maclean's* university issue is more than a ranking. It contains more than 30 pages of information on Canadian universities, and an evaluation of where they stand relative to one another in six categories: quality of the student body, class sizes, faculty quality, financial resources of the institution, reputation and library. All of the data is the best available public information, allowing readers to compare such things as average entering grades, the number of national awards and research fellowships won by each institution's faculty and students, the resources each school devotes to such areas as student services, scholarships and bursaries and libraries, and class sizes. It is by far the most comprehensive body of reliable and independent information available to university students and parents.

The overall ranking, with 47 universities divided into three mission-specific categories, is very similar to—and in fact more comprehensive than—rankings used by the leading U.S. publication in this field, *U.S. News and World Report*. It is probably the best ranking of universities available to students anywhere.

Much as some of them complain about being subjected to rankings, it would be fair to say that university presidents in Canada are obsessive about their standing relative to one another, and to their colleagues abroad. The University of Toronto, a ringleader of the *Maclean's* protests, can hardly issue a public statement without boasting of its world-class status and ambitions. For example, its 2005 "Stepping UP" plan explains that the university's "vision" is "to be a leader among the world's best public universities."

A worthy objective, to be sure. So how does U of T measure its progress? By rankings—or as it prefers to call them "benchmarks" and "performance indicators." It measures itself against national and global peers in five areas: student entering averages, faculty honours, faculty teaching awards, research yields and research publications and citations. Four of those five are covered in the *Maclean's* ranking. And yet U of T is one of the institutions that now says it can no longer make this sort of information available to *Maclean's*, because *Maclean's* will use it to "rank" the university.

All of this leads us to believe that U of T wants desperately to be considered a leader and a world-class institution, but would rather claim those titles than be objectively measured for them.

Interestingly, the Harvards and Yales and the great public universities of the world whose company the U of T would keep submit to rankings, almost all of them of lesser quality and comprehensiveness than the *Maclean's* rankings. As a spokesperson for Stanford University put it, "we think it's important to provide data that, when evaluated carefully, can help families make a good choice about a student's future. . . . If there's just one deserving student who becomes aware of Stanford and its accessibility through *U.S. News* or any of the many other guidebooks on the market, then it's worth the effort."

We don't mean to pick on U of T. It is only one of several complaining universities that have been pleased to boast of their performance in the rankings when they've liked the results. For example, Lakehead is "Canada's No. 1 Value-Added University." That statement has essentially become the university's slogan, featured prominently on its home page, and in a long-running ad campaign on Toronto's subways. As Lakehead's website helpfully explains, these findings come from the *Maclean's* rankings. Those would be the rankings that are apparently so flawed that Lakehead can no longer participate in them.

In fact, last year's Rankings Issue suggests that Lakehead is doing something right, and has something to crow about. Our value-added measure looks at incoming student grades (which are not high at Lakehead) and compares them to outcomes such as graduation rates and student awards—where Lakehead students outperform expectations. This seems like precisely the sort of information a potential student might want to know.

We are hard-pressed to see how increased public knowledge—which the boycotting universities presumably favour—can come from less public information—which is what the boycotting universities are proposing. That's why we will be publishing our 16th annual University Rankings Issue on Nov. 2. It will include a complete assessment of all universities and, as always, the most timely and best-available data. It will be a bigger issue than ever, with more comprehensive coverage of higher education than we have ever offered. And it will be paired with two issues in the spring: a new issue on graduate studies and professional schools, and the second annual University Student Issue, featuring the results of scientific surveys of students, asking them to assess their own universities.

So how do debates such as this get settled in a democratic society? From what we remember of first year political philosophy, they are best settled in the marketplace of ideas. Read the University Rankings Issue on Nov. 2 and make up your own mind. ■

ON THE WEB: *For Tony Keller's new universities blog, visit* www.macleans.ca/unblog

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Web Editor),
Pamela Chan (Producer)

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For letters to the editor, story proposals:
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BY PHONE
To comment on the magazine:
(416) 764-1706

BY MAIL
Maclean's, 11th floor,
One Mount Pleasant Road
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Editorial department:
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Fax: (416) 764-1332

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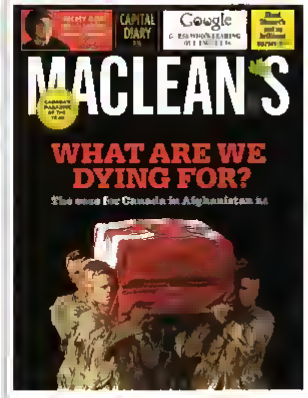
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'With the progress we have made in the overall quality of life in Afghanistan, we can pray the situation there improves'

CANADA AT WAR

IN YOUR STORY about our troop involvement in Afghanistan, you ask the question, "What are we dying for?" (Cover, Aug. 28). We surely aren't dying to score points with America for a better free trade deal. We aren't dying to achieve some myopic vision of peace in a land where our nation has no past, present or future interest. We surely aren't dying to protect the Afghan people, many of whom view the West as interlopers or invaders under the direction of George W. Bush's failed war on terror. All we have accomplished is to send our young men and women into harm's way. And until we bring them home, our international reputation as peacekeepers will continue to suffer—for no good reason.
Bob Smith, Toronto



UP UNTIL NOW, I was at a loss to understand why our soldiers were in Afghanistan, but after reading your editorial ("Canadians need to be told why we're at war," From the editors, Aug. 28), I see the endeavour with new clarity. In order to have the Afghan people under control, feudal landlords had kept tight control, while the only education the people received was religious. This resulted in an Afghanistan mired in the depth of ignorance. With the progress Canadians have made in improving the overall quality of life in Afghanistan, we can hope and pray the situation improves. Then the sacrifices of our soldiers will have been worth it.
Syed A. Rahman, Edmonton

INVITATION TO DISASTER

WE INVITED the entire class to my son's birthday party and there were a few kids who were uncontrollable ("Why wasn't I invited," Education, Aug. 7). The only option was to ban them from my home. As a parent, I have the right to invite the people I want into my home and I will retain that right regardless of what schools such as Labrador's Peacock Primary in Happy Valley-Goose Bay decide. The principal and teachers there should remember that school property is public, and that they get paid by taxpayers. They need to stick to teaching; God knows they have a hard enough time doing that properly.
Terry Hallick, Kingsville, Ont.

SHAMEFUL TREATMENT

WHEN I READ about a Canadian Forces reserve officer who lost his Ontario government job while he was in Afghanistan because a manager back home wanted to promote another employee ("That's gratitude," National, Aug. 14), I was reminded of the appalling plight of returning soldiers after the First World War who faced a similar fate. In this day and age, our vets should be treated with a greater degree of respect. Are we so bereft of common decency that this sort of shameful activity should go unpunished?
Michael McCartney, Toronto

A HARRY HULLABALOO

AS SOON AS I got my *Maclean's*, I was eager to read the Harry Potter article I saw mentioned on the top of the cover. Flipping as fast as I could, I started to read ("Save Harry," Media, Aug. 28). What the beginning of Patricia Treble's article didn't warn me about was that there were spoilers! Never mind book No. 7, I have not been able to read book No. 6, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005) because I am pregnant and my eyes are swollen and they don't focus well. That was so mean! Now I am totally mad at you guys.
Emilie Thibeault, Waterloo, Ont.

ELEPHANTS NEVER FORGET

NANCY MACDONALD'S wonderful piece about Joanna Burke's life and death caused me to weep all over again (The End, Aug. 28). Thank you all for sharing the story of this very special individual. Joanna's love for her elephant charges was well-known among those of us who saw her daily trips into the fields to feed and water the retirees from the cruelty of zoos and circuses. The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee stands as a testament to the dual nature of mankind—infinite goodness and unfathomable cruelty. Joanna was an angel on earth, allied with others in a quest to show us that the plight of the captive elephant is worthy of our attention. We, the public, must come to understand that mistreatment has consequences for these animals, the same as it would for a human being. Joanna and her family knew this. It is worth noting that on the Elephant Sanctuary website there is a poem, written by Joanna's father, honouring Winkie, the elephant that killed her, and telling her that Joanna would have forgiven her.
Jane Stanley, Toronto


JOANNA with one of her charges, a quest

MICHAEL TERCHA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

MORE ON HBO

IN HIS article on HBO ("No HBO? Blame our politicians and regulators," Aug. 7), Matthew Fraser makes inaccurate statements regarding the Canadian pay-television sector and the programming available on The Movie Network and Movie Central. Fraser incorrectly ascribes the premiere of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* to Showcase. Three seasons of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* played on The Movie Network before it appeared on Showcase. In fact, all HBO series air on The Movie Network prior to airing on conventional and specialty networks because The Movie Network has a contract with HBO to acquire and air in its pay window every single one of its dramatic series, films and documentaries. This means that series such as *The Sopranos*, *Rome*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Entourage* are all available in Canada, day and date with HBO. Furthermore, The Movie Network has far more first-run movie content than HBO or any other single U.S. pay network. The CRTC has not sanctioned the broadcast of HBO in Canada because there is no compelling reason to do so. Its programs are already here.
J. Kevin Wright, sr. vp. programming (The Movie Network), Astral Television Networks, Toronto

MACLEAN'S

PUBLISHER
KENNETH WHYTE

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, GM AND VP
Deborah Trenaman

Advertising Sales
Toronto (416) 764-1300
dsales@macleans.ca

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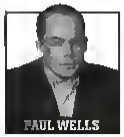
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Is he the prodigal son—or Martian outsider?



It's getting close to Sept. 11, so a few days ago I dug out my copy of the *New York Times Magazine* for Sept. 23, 2001. That's the cover date, but because of the lead time between production and publication, it was actually reported, written and put to bed within days of the attack on the World Trade Center. I like to read it to remember how people were thinking during that awful week.

This time I discovered a short essay that hadn't stood out before. It was written by Michael Ignatieff, who was teaching at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He describes a meeting of the school on the afternoon of 9/11, faculty and students trying to come to terms with the tragedy. "An expert on American leadership—a counsellor to presidents—expressed the belief that we are led by men and women who have not lost their nerve or their resolve," Ignatieff writes.

Somebody else mentions the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Then a student reminds everyone "that the day of infamy had been followed by an act of infamy on our part, the internment of Japanese-Americans," Ignatieff writes. "She did not want America to do this again, did not want us to lunge at an enemy within and dishonour our freedoms."

Let's look at that last sentence again, with a few words added to clarify what already seems pretty clear to me.

"She did not want America to do this again, did not want us [Americans] to lunge at an enemy within [the United States] and dishonour our [American] freedoms."

Here it is, only five years later, and Michael Ignatieff wants to be prime minister of our country. And just in case I'm not being clear, I mean *Canada*.

This isn't news. There's been grumbling in Liberal ranks about what some call Ignatieff's "pronoun problem" ever since he moved to Toronto in 2005. His pronoun problem is his tendency to use the first person plural—we, our—when discussing a country that isn't Canada. He makes sure not to do it anymore, but he used to.

I'm trying to decide how much this bothers me. I can tell you it bothers a lot of Liberals. At their recent Vancouver caucus meeting, those who aren't supporting Ignatieff often mentioned the more than 30 years during which his principal residence was in England or the United States. (He left Canada in 1969 and returned for less than two years in 1978.) "He's not a Liberal," a few said. "He's not Canadian," one or two said. But when I got to Toronto and reported this to *Maclean's* colleagues, one or two rolled their eyes theatrically. "God," one said. "How parochial."

Really?

Can you *imagine* somebody getting elected president of the United States whose 30-year stint outside the United States had ended less than three years earlier? Can you imagine a president of France who'd lived for 30 years in San Francisco or Seoul?

Let me be clear (he said, sounding oddly like Michael Ignatieff). I'm not saying foreign travel disqualifies you from politics. Indeed, you shouldn't be able to get far in politics unless you can show some stamps in your passport. Jacques Chirac studied at Harvard, Bill Clinton at Oxford. But there's a difference between weekend jaunts to Monaco or Seattle and the perfectly rootless existence of an incurable cosmopolitan. Sometimes the pronouns can help you spot the difference. I studied in Paris for nine months, for instance. But when I said "Let's get a beer," I didn't mean, "Let me get a beer along with all the people of my adopted nation, France." (Stéphane Dion, I submit, passes the pronoun test even though he holds dual French and Canadian citizenship. Others may disagree. This is a subjective business.)

The Ignatieff camp knows their man's life story is at once an asset and an albatross. Last week, one of them tried to peddle the theory that his return to Canada is like Garibaldi's to Italy. That one went sailing right over my head, but I read a little about Garibaldi and now I can say with some authority that the Italians should sue.

"Yeah, people have got questions about—been' out of the country," Ignatieff said when I interviewed him this summer for a forthcoming book. "I think Canadians rather like the fact that somebody's been out and has done stuff and has come back. What they want to be assured is that the guy knows the *country*, right? He's not some kind of *Martian*."

Oh my. Where would anyone get the idea that Ignatieff is a Martian? I mean, where besides the preface to his 2000 book *The Rights Revolution*. "This book may seem like a report by a visitor from a distant planet," Ignatieff warns Canadian readers. "I want to alert readers that I am a Martian outsider."

At the end of that preface, Ignatieff reassures his audience that writing *The Rights Revolution* "has deepened my attachment to the place on earth that, if I needed one, I would call home." That may be the rub. Some of us like our leaders to call Canada home even when it's merely optional. M



J.P. MOCZULSKI/REUTERS

The Ignatieff camp knows their man's life story is at once an asset and an albatross

ON THE WEB: *For more Paul Wells, visit his blog at* www.macleans.ca/inklesswells



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If security fails, there is always a scapegoat: freedom



ANDREW POTTER

The early response last month to the foiled Heathrow bomb plot had the virtue of raising hopes for a new genre of film the airline terror-comedy, in which incompetent hijackers dentally assault passengers with tubes of Crest or torment them with a thousand paper cuts using pages torn from Clive Cussler novels

It also raised, yet again, the perennial question of how much freedom we should trade for our security Following the attacks of 9/11, many governments in the West moved to implement a suite of anti-terrorism measures The most notorious was the U S Patriot Act, but Canada's hastily conceived Bill C-36 was actually more draconian, proposing a number of distinctly illiberal measures such as preventive arrest and forced testimony The general feeling was that we had too much "freedom" and not enough "security," and that the new normal would involve more or less permanently curtailing civil liberties in the name of increased security

Over the past half-decade, there has been considerable public debate over how to strike the appropriate balance between the two, with hawks demanding more security and doves holding out for freedom But neither side has really questioned the underlying assumption, that the relationship between freedom and security is essentially a see-saw as one goes up, the other must go down This is unfortunate, because the idea that freedom and security are values in conflict threatens to lead us to political disaster

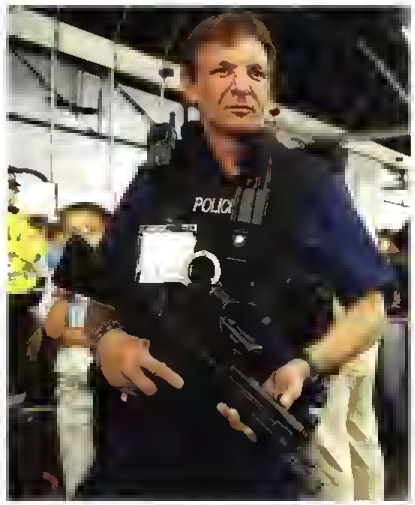
The confusion started with Thomas Hobbes According to Hobbes, in the state of nature—the hypothetical condition of humanity before the state moved in to assert its monopoly over the use of force—humans had maximum freedom, in that we all had the right to do anything we wanted But what this means is that if I have the right to bonk you on the head and steal your supper, you have the right to do likewise to me As a result of total freedom, everyone lives in a condition of constant fear and total insecurity, what Hobbes famously called "the war of all against all." Hobbes's solution was the security state, to which we hand over some of our natural freedom for the sake of increased security

When it comes to dealing with terrorism, we are all Hobbesians Faced with a new terrorist plot, successful or not, we instinctively blame it on a surfeit of freedom Were the terrorists radicalized at a mosque in London? Too much freedom of religion. Did they try to smuggle a bomb onto a plane by hiding it in a water bottle? Too much freedom of carry-on luggage

The truth is, many of the holes in our security net are the result not of too much "freedom," but of poorly designed institutions and infrastructure. For example, before 9/11, airport security in the U S was operated by private companies who were employed by either the airlines or the airport operator For obvious reasons, there were powerful incentives for them to do it as cheaply and unobtrusively as possible, and after the attacks many people were surprised to discover that millions of lives and billions of dollars worth of equipment were being protected by poorly educated and trained security personnel earning something close to minimum wage

At the level of infrastructure, the most important improvements in public security have built on the British idea of removing garbage cans from subway platforms (to minimize potential hiding places for bombs). We have variously put air marshals on high-risk flights, provided better training for flight attendants, and strengthened cockpit doors All of this has had a tremendous impact on security without affecting civil liberties in the least

Of course there are limits to how effective these sorts of steps can be A great deal of what passes for security in our society is symbolic, a device for convincing the public that it is okay to go to a hockey game or take a trip to see relatives. At a certain point, though, useful symbolism degenerates into a theatre of the absurd. The public seems to recognize this, if the hostile reaction to the new rules about carry-on luggage is any indication



EDDIE MULHOLLAND / REX FEATURES

Were the terrorists radicalized at a mosque in London? Too much freedom of religion.

The argument is not that we have done all we can in terms of public security We should keep our eyes open for weak points, holes that can be plugged What we have to guard against is the line where security measures stop providing reassurance and start fuelling paranoia. If there is anything genuinely frightening about terrorism, it is that it will spark an immune response in which we look inward in search of enemies and seek to purge anything that looks remotely threatening The decision to ban toothpaste and duty free booze from airplanes is an early sign of that response If that sounds absurd, you haven't been paying attention Over the past few weeks, there have been countless stories of planes being diverted because air crews were worried by passengers who acted suspicious, or of brown skinned people being hounded off planes by hysterical fellow travellers

When it comes to improving security, it is not always necessary to sacrifice some of our freedom And if in trying to trade freedom for security we end up repudiating our fundamental liberal values, then perhaps we shouldn't try to do it all M

ON THE WEB *For more Andrew Potter, visit his new blog at* www.macleans.ca/andrewpotter



STORY OF THE WEEK—THE GREAT ESCAPE

On Aug 23, 18-year-old Austrian Natascha Kampusch, who was abducted on her way to school eight years ago, escaped from her captor and from the soundproof basement cellar that had been her prison Shortly after Kampusch fled, her kidnapper, 44-year-old Wolfgang Priklopil, killed himself by jumping in front of a commuter train In a statement, Kampusch expressed grief for Priklopil's death, leading psychiatrists to speculate she is suffering from "Stockholm Syndrome."

Good news

Justice in action

It was a rewarding week for detectives investigating high-profile crimes. First, OPP officers arrested former NHL agent David Frost—best known for being the target of a murder-for-hire plot hatched by St. Louis Blues forward Mike Danton—and charged him with 12 counts of sexual exploitation and one count of sexual assault After a lengthy manhunt, the FBI apprehended one of its 10 most wanted—polygamist leader Warren Jeffs—during a routine traffic stop in Nevada. But prosecutors in Colorado were not quite as fortunate Officials were forced to admit that John Mark Karr, the prime suspect in the murder of six-year old JonBenet Ramsey, had nothing to do with her 1996 death after DNA testing came back negative That the true killer remains at large is a chilling prospect, but at the very least, the public can rest assured that the wheels of justice still spin, however slowly

A woman's touch

Last week, in an unexpected turn of events, the Islamic Society of North America, the continent's largest Muslim organization, elected its first female president—a Canadian-born convert who grew up in Kitchener, Ont Ingrid Mattson, 43, has long encouraged fellow Muslim women to strive for leadership roles, and her election is widely seen as a wake-up call for a religion rife with gender discrimination It sends a wonderful message to the community, said one member, "that Muslim women, who are sometimes seen as less, can rise to these positions."

Time for Plan B

After years of emotional debate, U S federal regulators have decided to grant women 18 and over access to the morning-after pill without a prescription Also known as Plan B, the pill has been approved as a safe form of over-the-counter emergency contraception in 33 nations, including Canada. Critics fear the decision will encourage young people to engage in sex indiscriminately But health and women's advocacy groups insist easier access to Plan B will dramatically reduce abortions and unplanned pregnancies in the U S

Bad news

Iran gets boider

At the opening ceremony for a power plant that could potentially be used in the production of nuclear weapons, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reaffirmed his belief in his country's right to develop nuclear technology—even if sanctions are imposed. "Iran is not a threat to anybody," he said, "not even to the Zionist regime" Iran has so far shown no intention of complying with a UN Security Council request that it suspend uranium enrichment by Aug 31 Still, the Iranian leader stressed that Iran remains open to friendly dialogue In fact, on Tuesday, he challenged U S President George W Bush to a live and "uncensored" TV debate on "ways to get out of the standoffs" Even if it weren't an entirely implausible scenario, such a debate would not likely generate much comfort in the West History has shown President Bush works better with a script

Tragedy strikes

It was a bad week for Canadians on the road and in the air On Sunday, a commuter jet crashed during takeoff from a Kentucky airport, killing 49 people, including two Ottawa residents and a Vancouver woman The next day, Benoit Sauvageau, a popular Bloc Québécois MP, died when his car hit a tow truck parked on the side of a road in his Repentigny riding He was 42, with four children Later that evening, a Greyhound bus bound for Montreal smashed through a highway guardrail in upstate New York, and landed upside down Five people died, including three Canadians According to a *Toronto Star* report, the bus had passed its annual inspection one week earlier.

FACE OF THE WEEK



A SUPPORTER of leftist Mexican presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador, defeated on July 2, demands a recount

EDUARDO VERDUGO/AP

Joining the team

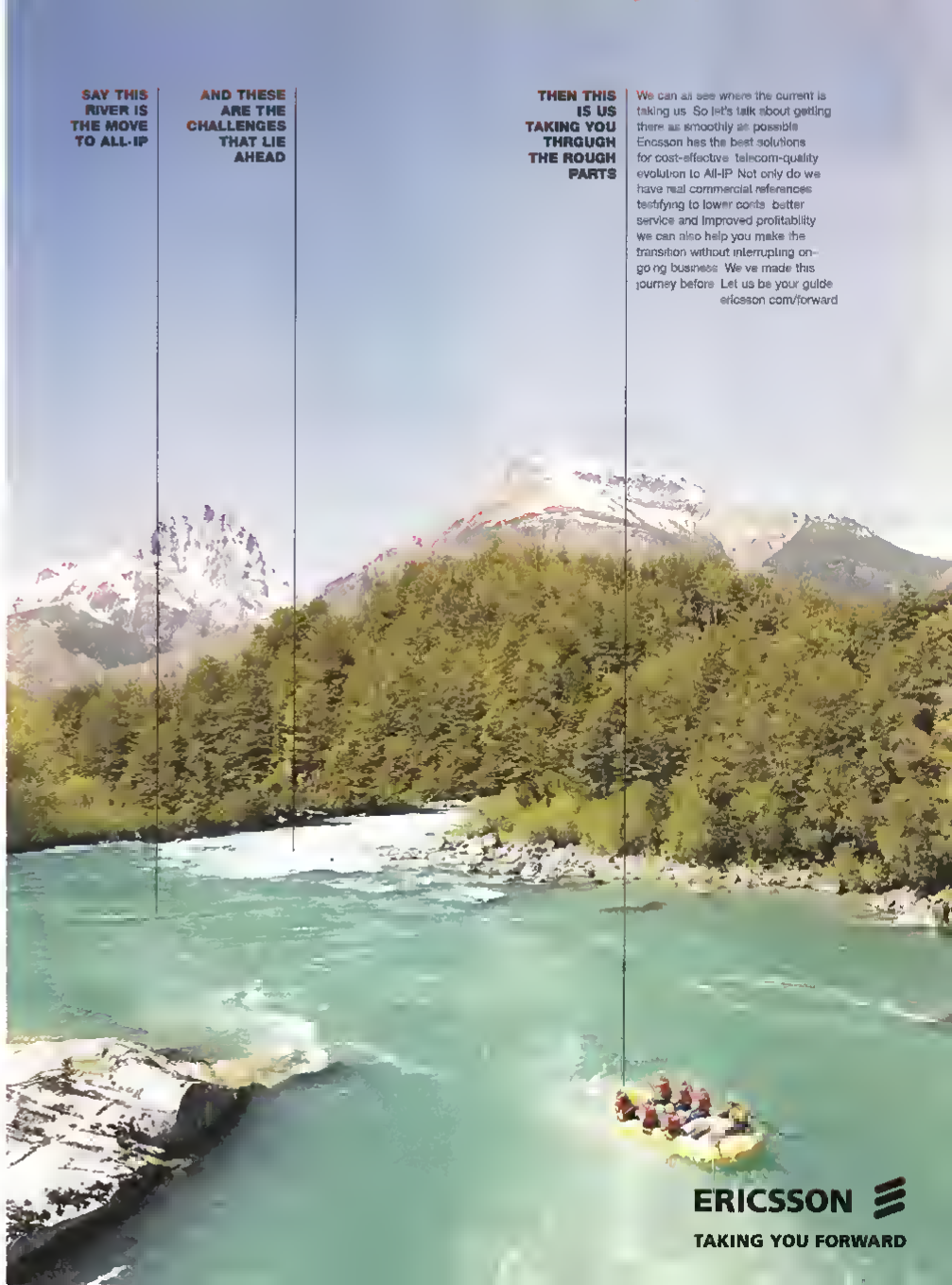
Wal-Mart has decided to reach out to the gay community by teaming up with the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce The goal, says a company spokesperson, is to extend a hand "to people who are a significant part of our customer base" Some conservative groups have slammed the move, warning that "cheap prices on goods from China" won't be enough to win back offended and alienated customers Happily, Wal-Mart is following an old adage doing what's right is not always what's popular.

Funny 'cuz it's true

Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont , made worldwide headlines after launching a recruitment drive that pokes fun at George W Bush. The centrepiece of its "Yale Shmale" campaign is a poster of the U S President atop the caption "Graduating from an Ivy League university doesn't necessarily mean you're smart." As expected, some found the ad offensive and low-brow Fair enough But far more troubling was the reaction of Lakehead's student union president, Isabelle Poniatowski "Repugnant," she said. It's a sad day when the student government has a duller sense of humour than the school administration.

Still no HBO

HBO ruled the Emmy Awards last weekend, winning a total of 10 gold statues—and beating every other network in the process In fact, HBO has led in nominations every year since 2000–Sadly, we can't watch the best TV has to offer since HBO is still off-limits in Canada M





7 DAYS

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF JOHN MARK KARR

The eager confessor flew back to the U S in first class last week, elaborating his yarn about killing JonBenet Ramsey By Monday, his 15 minutes were up and police in Colorado dismissed Karr as a suspect after his DNA failed to match that found on the child's body With the media circus over, Karr's immediate future concerned responding to charges of possessing child pornography. And perhaps admitting to killing Jimmy Hoffa and causing global warming

DISCOVERY

A light warm-up

Pulses of near infrared light can be even more effective in athletes' warm ups than conventional exercises Researchers at Japan's Kanazawa University found that a device that produces light to warm up shoulder muscles works better than traditional stretches It could prove to be a competitive advantage for athletes, since warm up exercises consume their energy, reducing overall performance

Arthur's table found

Archaeological research at Windsor Castle near London has uncovered remnants of a building constructed in the 14th century, during the reign of Edward III



GROPING A RAM can make you a winner in Iceland

It's believed to have housed a giant table to accommodate the original 300 Knights of the Garter Researchers suggest that it may have played a role in fostering the myth of King Arthur and his knights of the round table

WILD KINGDOM

Natural-born killers

The Australian Department of Primary Industries is working on making artificial uteruses for endangered grey nurse sharks They've turned to reproductive innovation because of grey nurse shark embryos' nasty ways When they're just 10 cm long they have jaws, and they eat one another This *in utero* fratricide results in only one or two shark pups emerging out of 80 embryos Scientists intend to flush embryos out of pregnant sharks and raise them in the artificial wombs Fewer than 460 grey nurse sharks are thought to exist

Wasp cities

Experts don't know why it's happening, but in southern Alabama, yellow jacket wasps are building nests the size of Volkswagens Entomologists from Auburn University are aware of 16 of the giant colonies, and warn residents to stay away because of the yellow jacket's painful sting One nest found inside a barn was so large it had to be taken down in sections Another filled the interior of an abandoned car One theory scientists are considering is that a mild winter last year along with a drought enabled the yellow jackets to expand their numbers

Little snappers

Gram for gram, no animal in the whole kingdom has a fiercer bite than the trap-jaw ant. Using high-speed digital photos, scientists have found that the trap jaw ant can snap its mandible at 100 km/h, applying a force



FASTEST biters on the planet

300 times its own body weight Native to Central and South America, the ants use their jaws to defend their nests, but also to dig into the ground and hurl themselves through the air when danger approaches "This is really by far and away the fastest recorded animal limb movement," says researcher Sheila Patek of the University of California, Berkeley. "The ants' jaws are relatively short, but they deliver such a powerful bite because they can accelerate so quickly"

MORTALITY

Stand tall, and smart

Here's another reason to be jealous of tall people The reason they make more money is that they're more intelligent than shorter people An extra four inches of height means an extra 10 per cent in salary, but it's not just because employers are impressed with taller people The advantage begins in childhood Tall children perform better on cognitive tests, thanks to the quality of nutrition a child receives between birth and age 3, which can play a big role in determining both height and intelligence

POLL WATCH

Men in rubbers

What is the sexiest profession of all? A British insurance company polled 1,818 men and women and found that 47 per cent of women fantasize about firefighters, while 54 per cent of men fantasize about nurses in uniform For women, 28 per cent fantasize about soldiers, 27 per cent businessmen At the low end, only 6 5 per cent of men dream of traffic wardens and 1 7 per cent of women fantasize about politicians At the very bottom of the sex heap are milkmen, who turn on just 0 8 per cent of women

IN OTHER NEWS

Hands on rams

Last weekend's ram-groping competition in Sævangur, Iceland, was a great success Now in its fourth year, the competition pits contestants in two categories, experienced gropers and inexperienced ones The aim is to feel the animals to determine their worth as breeding stock. The participant who grades the animals nearest to an order secretly chosen by a panel of experts wins

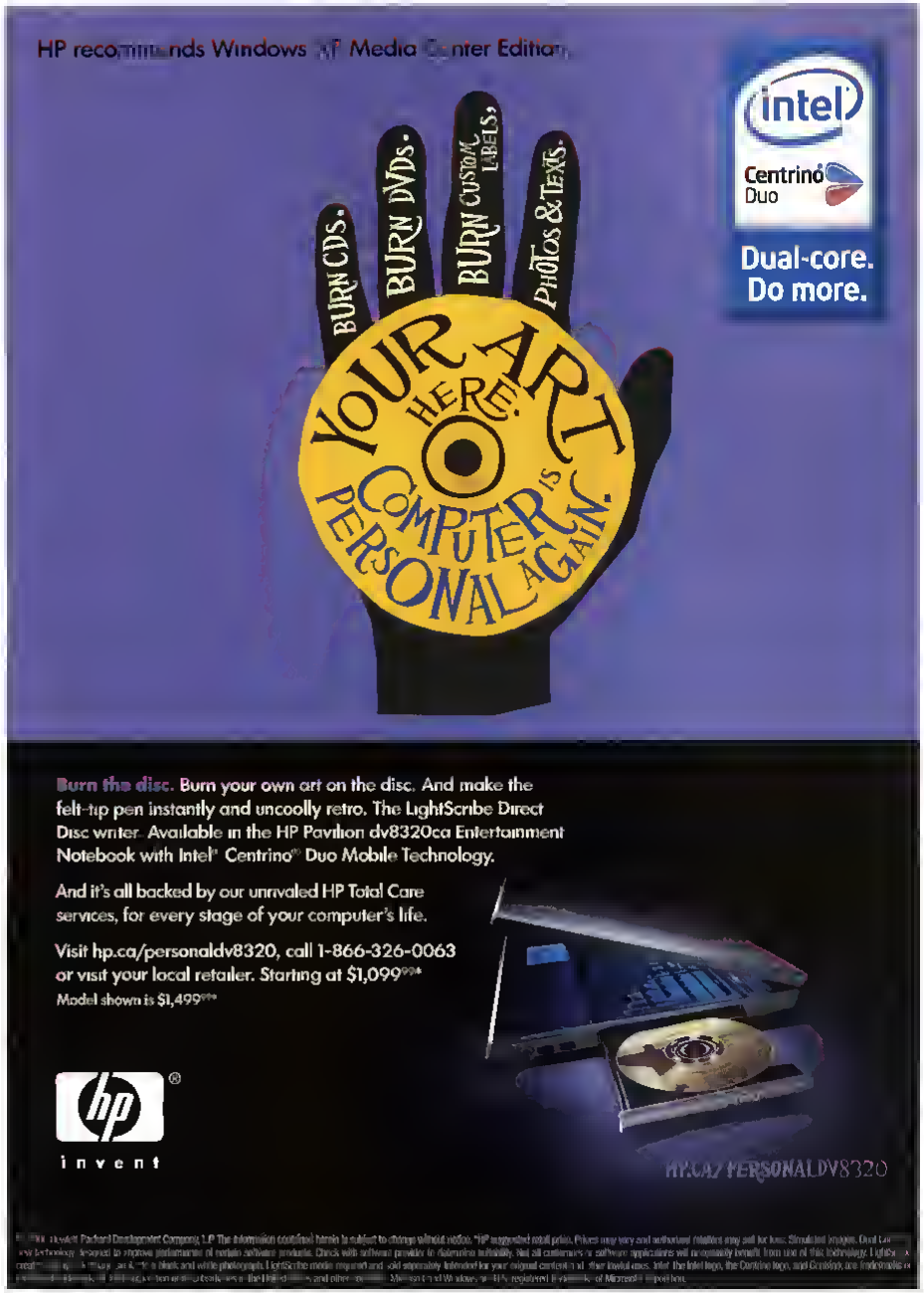


FERGUSON The high notes

CATHERINE KARNOW/CORBIS AP
JOE GILL/AP

IN PASSING

Walter "Maynard" Ferguson, 78, trumpeter Born in Montreal, he began his career at age 13 with the CBC orchestra. In the 1940s and '50s he performed with jazz greats such as Duke Ellington and became famous for being able to hit extremely high notes M



CAPITAL DIARY

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON MAY'S MAKEOVER, THE HILL'S TAILOR TROUBLES, AND RAE'S POWER KISSES





ELIZABETH MAY (right) and her daughter call home to share the news; (inset) Suzuki

WILL DAVID SUZUKI OFFICIALLY GO GREEN?

The newly elected leader of the Green Party of Canada could use some more green. In one of **Elizabeth May**'s official photos, her "Liberal red" jacket had to be Photoshopped the party's namesake colour. May says her wardrobe comes primarily from Frenchy's, a chain of East Coast used-clothing shops. She paid $6 for the vest she wore to the recent Green convention at the Ottawa Congress Centre, and $2 for her shoes. This past June, when she left her position as executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada, the Sierra Youth Coalition gave her a makeover as a parting gift. May was hauled off to an Aveda salon for a cut and colour. Even with her funky new glasses, however, a call to the *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* folks couldn't hurt.

In the next election, May plans to run in Nova Scotia against Liberal incumbent **Rodger Cuzner** (Cape Breton-Canso), who is her sister-in-law's cousin. Though she lives in Ottawa, May summers on Cape Breton Island and will be banking on her star power and her reputation as an avid environmentalist. Unfortunately, SES Research pollster Nik Nanos predicted at the Green convention that Atlantic Canada will be the Greens' lowest area of growth. Nanos also noted a surprising trend: the 2006 election saw many Green votes come from former Conservatives. He predicts the greatest gains for the Greens will come from Western Canada, particularly Alberta.

By the same token, past Green party leader **Jim Harris** reminded the convention crowd that green is also the colour of money. Under Harris, whose 308 Green candidates received enough votes in the past two elections to qualify for over $1 million in federal funding, the party platform was fiscally conservative. One Green delegate sniffed, "I've smelled more perfume and cologne than marijuana at this convention. Too many suits." May says she was influenced to run by **David Suzuki**, and she is confident he will stand as a Green candidate in the next election. After her victory was declared, she called her family from a pay phone in the convention centre lobby. The new Green leader still has no cellphone.

MPS' CUFFS WILL MATCH THE CURTAINS

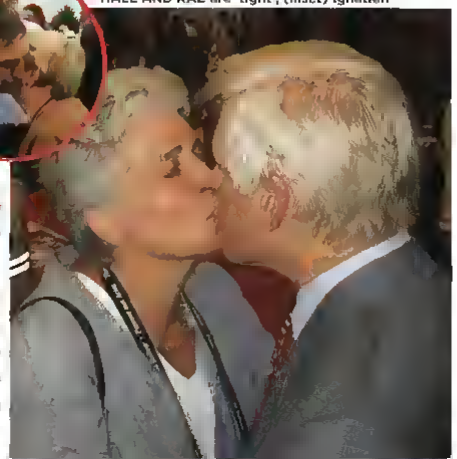
Over the summer, MPs had their publicly funded tailoring services reduced to one day a week. The Hill's full-time tailor, Nick De Franco, who arrived in Canada from Italy in 1956, retired in June. De Franco, who sewed and hemmed navy blue, brown, black and grey fabrics for government employees for the past 24 years, was not replaced. The reduced tailoring service has placed tremendous pressure on the Hill's upholstery service staff, who mainly spend their days sewing curtains, fixing heritage furniture or repairing the green chairs in the House (which, for the record, are stuffed with hog and horsehair). In the event of a sartorial emergency—a split crotch or a popped off button, or before an important speech ("It happened often," according to the former tailor)—the upholstery team will drop what they are doing. So far, the curtain seamstress has been tackling those situations, since there is no trained tailor in the upholstery department. Non-emergency tailoring is hereupon restricted to Thursdays.

AND THE WINNER FOR BEST KISSER IN A LIBERAL LEADERSHIP CONTEST...

Friends of **Bob Rae** say when they see him on the campaign trail they can expect some serious lip action. Rae's kissing style is "tight," says Ontario human rights chief commissioner and former Toronto mayor **Barbara Hall**, who recently got some lip on lip attention from her old friend. Rae's smooches, she adds, are always assertive. Even his cheek kisses have minimal air. **Michael Ignatieff**, on the other hand, appears to be more of a cheek-on cheek kind of guy. M

Mitchel Raphael can be contacted at mitchelraphael@attglobal.net





HALL AND RAE are 'tight'; (inset) Ignatieff

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCHEL RAPHAEL







INTERVIEW

'This view that kids are vending machines, where you put in more homework, you get out more learning, is painfully naive'

ALFIE KOHN, AUTHOR OF *THE HOMEWORK MYTH*, TALKS TO KENNETH WHYTE ABOUT HOW ALL THAT HOMEWORK IS HURTING KIDS

Q. *What's wrong with homework? I think the general assumption is that it gives kids something to do in the evening instead of watching MTV. It teaches them a work ethic and presumably makes them smarter and prepares them for college and for success in an evermore demanding workplace.*

A. Let's start with the assumption that it teaches them a useful work ethic as opposed to teaching them to be mindless drones who follow orders uncritically, and let's look into whether it helps them to be smarter and to think more critically. The available data flatly failed to prove those last two assumptions.

Q. *That it makes them smarter and improves their marks?*

A. Right. Overwhelmingly, the research shows no academic advantage to homework, particularly for younger children. In fact, for younger children there isn't even a correlation between the amount of homework done and any measure of academic achievement.

Q. *By younger children you're talking up to high school?*

A. That's right. At the high school level there is a correlation between homework done and standardized achievement measures, but the correlation is weak. It tends to fall apart when you use more sophisticated statistical methods, and in any case it doesn't show that homework was responsible for the increased achievement.

Q. *What about the other supposed benefits of homework?*

A. The idea that it teaches good study skills, or builds character, or provides other non-academic advantages has never been demonstrated empirically. You could call it an urban myth except that it's accepted in suburban and rural areas.

Q. *But why wouldn't a couple of hours in the evening spent reading, doing exercises in a workbook—why wouldn't that help you as a student, make you a little smarter?*

A. The assumption that it would is based on a fundamental set of misconceptions about how learning happens. When teachers talk about "reinforcing" what kids are taught in school, they're borrowing from an outdated view of learning called behaviourism that's more concerned about producing behaviours than about enhancing understanding. Moreover, there's a lot of research to show that more time on a task is not necessarily associated with better proficiency at that task.

Q. *So teachers have kids for six or seven hours a day, and that's enough time to teach them what they need to know?*

A. Yes. Kids who aren't assigned homework are not put at any kind of academic disadvantage. The research is pretty clear on that. But then there's the separate value question: is it justifiable to take kids who have just spent six or seven hours in school and force them to work a second shift, or should they have the right to get some rest, or get some exercise, or hang out with friends? The assumption that kids will be up to no good unless they have their free time structured for them represents a very dark and cynical view of kids and helps to explain why so much busy work is given to them.

Q. *If the research doesn't support the value of homework, why is it accepted so widely?*

A. One reason is because we have this view that kids are vending machines where you put in more homework and you get out more learning, which turns out to be painfully naive, and preferred by people who don't really understand how learning takes place. Second is this cynical view of kids where we "gotta keep the young moral after school," and so because we don't trust children, we assume we have to force them to do stuff their every waking moment.

Q. *Is it parents, mostly, who are demanding all the homework?*

A. Depends who you ask. The teachers who understand the pointlessness of homework are quick to say they feel that parents—all-informed parents—are demanding more homework, but I speak to many parents who say exactly the opposite, that they are sick of the battles over homework at home, most of it is pointless busy work, and they want the family time, but the teachers and administrators wave them away.

Q. *I'll play devil's advocate again. If a father or mother sits down with a child and they do a homework project together, that's family time,*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TSAR FEDORSKY/GETTY IMAGES

isn't it? And better family time than, say, a trip to the mall?

A: You're drawing a false dichotomy by suggesting that without doing math problems together parents would be wasting their time with their kids. There's a value issue here. Who should decide what families do together: the families themselves or the schools? Number two, I hear lots of stories of families who in fact spend wonderful times together learning, and learning about each other, and feeling connected when they watch a TV program together, or cook together, or play catch, or simply talk. Third, much of the homework doesn't enhance understanding, so having a parent and kid go over 50 math problems that fail to help kids understand mathematical principles is not family togetherness in the best sense of that term.

Q: *Is there empirical evidence that not doing homework makes them happier or leads to closer families or promotes other social or personal benefits?*

A: I'm not sure how you prove the negative here—that the absence of homework helps. It may be sufficient to point to the enormous anecdotal evidence of nagging and conflict, of frustration and exhaustion. Most parents understand the downside of homework. What they need a study for is to show them that the benefits are an illusion.

Q: *Can you give me an example of what might be considered good or useful homework?*

A: Well, the good stuff would be, first, chosen by the students so that the kids have some role in a democratic classroom community of deciding what is so vital that it ought to spill over to the after-school hours. Second, it might simply involve free choice reading rather than writing those godawful book reports that could destroy anyone's love of books. Third, it might take the form of activities that logically ought to be done at home, like replicating a science experiment in one's own kitchen, or interviewing one's parents about family history, rather than the kind of stuff that could be and should be done at school. I guess my overall point is not, let's get rid of homework altogether, but that we should change the default state. Right now, the default is to make kids do school work at home almost every day, regardless of whether it's necessary. If the burden of proof, so to speak, was on educators to say that a given assignment is so useful that we're going to presume to interrupt family time to ask you to do it, that's a very different situation.

Q: *When we're giving kids a lot of homework, we think we are preparing them for a more competitive world, and to hear you say that we're actually turning them into mindless drones who are going to grow up not to like learning is alarming.*

A: As well it should be. One of the other explanations I give for homework's pervasiveness is a phenomenon I call BGUTI, which stands for Better Get Used To It. Even though there is no demonstrable value of doing this busy work, people in the future will give you busy-work too, so you'd better start doing it now. It's remarkable how an absurd view like that drives so much of our educational system, and sometimes our approach to parenting. The idea that the point of school is not to help kids become deep thinkers who love to learn but rather to take standardized tests better than their counterparts in other countries represents a warped set of priorities if I've ever seen one.

Q: *But for a lot of years in Canada and in the U.S. we've had educational systems that did not seem to be accountable, where achievement wasn't—or didn't seem to be—measurable, and while standardized tests are imperfect they are at least one measure. Aren't standardized test scores one of the drivers of homework?*

A: Well, point one is that more homework doesn't even raise standardized test scores. Nor does subjecting kids to lots of standardized tests. Finland tends to place near the top of those international measures, and they give virtually no standardized tests of the sort that Ontario and Alberta and now B.C. are pushing to make kids do. Politicians and corporate executives have sold us a bill of goods by convincing us that turning schools into test prep centres is the best way to hold schools accountable. In fact, those tests tend to measure what matters least, so we undermine the quality of instruction in a desperate attempt to produce higher tests scores.

Q: *For those school board members and parents and politicians who want some sort of measure of academic success and achievement, what alternative is there?*

A: The most important aspects of learning can't be reduced to numbers. If you want to know whether a school is terrific, you look to how many kids not only can read but do read, how many kids come home chattering excitedly about stuff they figured out that day, how many students continue to argue animatedly about something in class after class is over. But there are ways for folks who want something more routine or quantified to judge the quality of schools. For example, the best schools do not grade students, rather they assess the quality of their learning by having them exhibit in careful ways what they've learned and what they're able to do with what they've learned. They also collect portfolios of their own assignments that reveal the kids' growing understanding. When you sample a few of those portfolios in a given school, you get a cross-section of what's going on in the classrooms that allows you to make inferences about the quality of the instruction.

Q: *That's all well and good, but everybody's got kids that they want to go to university, and universities have entrance requirements that are based on grades and scores.*

A: That's a different challenge. First of all, no standardized test and no grade would ever be necessary before Grade 9 if that was the primary concern, because no university admissions office could care less what kids are doing before high school. Second, within high school, there are universities in Canada and the United States who accept students who have no grades because of the kind of school that they went to, or in some cases were home-schooled, and those universities have a richer sense of the applicant by looking at interviews and essays, and an annotated transcript demonstrating what the kids are capable of doing.

Q: *You've got this wonderful quote in the book from an independent school in Colorado—the director of it, I guess—who says that 6½ hours a day in school is enough, kids and families need the rest of the days for living and playing. How did we ever lose our way on this one?*



'Parents are sick of the battles over homework, most of it pointless. They want the family time.'



A: Part of it has to do with the extent to which we are too polite, or too fearful to question the conventional wisdom. We allow folks up on Mount Olympus, far from the real world of classrooms and kitchen tables, to pontificate about tougher standards and raising the bar, compelling us to do what really doesn't make sense at all to our children. So really this is not just a question of learning what the research says about homework, but of being willing to speak out, to take a stand against what is nonsensical at best and damaging to our children at worst.

Q: *The trends are all going against you, it seems. Over the last 10, 15 years, kids are getting a lot more homework, not less.*

A: More and more homework is being required of younger and younger children as the tougher standards fad trickles down. This is part of the horrific tendency to remake schools in the image of factories, where kindergarten now comes to resemble the worst first grade classrooms, where the only question that matters is how will this raise the test scores and make the adults look better. But there is a counter movement. I've travelled all across North America and I've heard heartening stories of a principal in Alberta who actively encourages the parents to boycott the tests, of parents in and around Toronto who are making their voices heard and who are now at least crawling out of the hole that the Tories dug in Ontario for the worst form of American instruction. In the U.S., we have gone farther down this bleak and barren road and thus have a longer distance to traverse in moving back toward common sense. But we can do it.

Q: *What are the effects on young kids—especially elementary school kids—of a lot of homework? Does it actively hurt them?*

A: It's not great—in many cases—for their emotional well-being, but what troubles me is the apparent effect on their love of learning. If homework was merely pointless, I could understand why some parents would swallow hard and let it go, but in many cases what we're seeing are kids who are turned off to reading, to figuring out math problems, to discovering truths about the natural world. Their inborn curiosity is evaporating in the face of backpacks laden with pointless assignments. And that's where I think parents have to take action, because I think in general homework isn't merely failing to help, it's actively hurting kids' disposition to learn.

Q: *If one believes that kids should have time just to play and develop, we just don't give them any opportunity to do it at all, or very much.*

A: I think part of the reason for that comes from an unhealthy push for conventional success on the part of parents, trying to create little resumés on legs. But I think also this reflects that same distrust of children that I spoke of earlier: they couldn't possibly do anything constructive if left to their own devices, and God knows what kind of mischief they'd get into if we didn't tell them that they had a piano lesson at 4:30. Homework has become part of the modern cod-liver oil that we think is going to make them shape up. These are dark views of children—and by extension human nature—that say we have to control their time for them, otherwise only bad things will result. I think it behooves us to at least put those assumptions on the table where we can examine them and see whether they are accurate and productive.

Q: *If you're a parent and you believe your child's getting too much homework and that the time could be better used, what do you do about it? How do you speak to your teacher, principal or school board trustee?*

A: Ideally, you don't walk in there alone, you start talking to other parents, and you begin to understand that you're not alone in your concerns about homework. The schools will pay more attention to five parents who come in and say this homework garbage has got to stop. I think all parents have to educate themselves so that they know what the research really says, namely that there's no evidence of any academic benefit from homework in elementary school, and no support for the assumption that homework promotes good work habits or self-discipline. Parents have to start asking the questions that matter. This drives me nuts, that parents confine themselves to asking piddly questions about whether kids are allowed to use the Internet for a certain assignment, or when it's due, instead of asking questions like, "What reason is there to think that this assignment is worth doing, what evidence exists to show that traditional homework is necessary for children to become better thinkers?"

Q: *Yeah, but if I start asking those questions every time my children see an assignment they don't like, are they going to ask the same question, "What possible good could this do?"*

A: I hope so. What worries me far more than a kid who asks inconvenient and impolitic questions is one who grows up thinking that his or her job in life is to mindlessly obey rules, even if they're not reasonable, and simply to do what one is told.

Q: *But as a parent you're always looking to make things easier for yourself, aren't you? And having them do homework without question every night does make things a lot easier.*

A: You bet it does. Putting yourself on autoparent and avoiding conflict whenever possible is a lot easier, but does it help kids to grow up into the kind of people we hope they'll be—independent thinkers who are compassionate, responsible, happy, ethical, and so on? That takes more time and talent on the part of parents as well as teachers. If we want kids to be citizens in a democratic society as well as thinkers, then we're going to have to encourage them to challenge the stuff that should be challenged, and to be outraged by the outrageous.

Q: *If a parent looks at the homework and thinks that it's not what their child should be wasting his time on and he stops doing it, his marks are going to fall, and you're going to end up with bigger problems, aren't you?*

A: I wouldn't start with mere non-compliance. I would begin by inviting the educators to look at the research, perhaps sending them articles, asking respectful but pointed questions. I would have parents start to speak up in public forums, write letters to the editor, ask questions of the principal. And then, if none of this works, some parents will say that as a last resort their final responsibility is to their children, and if their children are losing interest in learning, are weeping, are coming to dread the evenings at home, then parents have to do what's best for their kids, and lower marks is in the long run perhaps not too steep a price to pay for getting back curiosity and emotional health. M



'The idea that homework teaches good study skills or builds character has never been demonstrated'





WHITE MAN'S WINDFALL

The biggest winner in the residential schools settlement is not a native. He's a lawyer named Tony Merchant, and his firm's take could hit $100 million. No wonder he has so many critics.

BY JONATHON GATEHOUSE • PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER WAHL

There are six Dictaphones spread out like a fan on the table in Tony Merchant's hotel-suite-cum-Ottawa-office, each labelled with the name of a different secretary. It's more efficient that way, as he bounces from file to file, shuffling through the stacks of legal documents set out before him. When the tapes are full, he couriers them home to Regina to be transcribed into letters, court submissions and statements of claim. Time is money.

Merchant may well be the busiest lawyer in Canada. By his own account, he billed an astounding 5,300 hours last year—an average of almost 15 hours each and every day, devoted solely to his clients. (A lawyer who bills 2,000 hours annually is considered a top producer at most big Canadian firms, and that requires lots of late evenings and weekends.) The fact that Merchant sleeps only a few hours a night helps. So does his long-ago acquired habit of eating only one meal a day—dinner. Still, it doesn't leave much time for family life, or his other passions, travel and politics. Merchant's wife, Pana, a Liberal senator for Saskatchewan, recalls a recent Christmas Day when they had five of Tony's clients scattered throughout the house, waiting to discuss their cases.

Merchant's firm, the Merchant Law Group, employs about 40 lawyers, including his three sons, based mostly in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. It claims to have the largest family law practice in Canada, and is involved in more than two dozen class action lawsuits, including product liability claims against General Motors, Sears, and the makers of Paxil, Vioxx, and silicon breast implants, as well as actions on behalf of shareholders of Molson Inc. and Hollinger Inc. But that's not the legal work Tony Merchant has been banking on for the past decade.

This trim 61-year-old with the kind of preternaturally smooth skin and dark hair one used to associate with Dick Clark also claims to represent more than 10,000 former students of Indian residential schools—and that's put his firm in line for the lion's share of the biggest legal payday in Canadian history. This week, an Ontario court begins the process of signing off on the federal government's new $1.9-billion settlement package for survivors of the state- and church-run Aboriginal education system. The proceedings, which will be followed by similar hearings in five other provinces and three territories between now and mid-October, were supposed to be a formality. No longer.

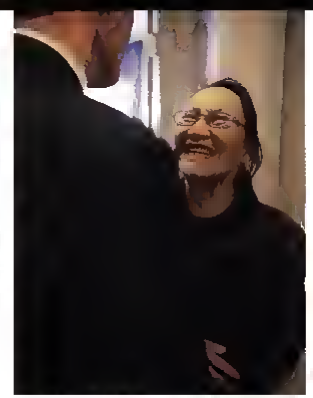
That's because the Merchant Law Group and the federal government are locked in a nasty battle over fees that threatens to delay—if not derail—the implementation of a deal designed to redress one of Canadian history's greatest wrongs. Merchant is sure what his take should be: $40 million upfront, and tens of millions more once special tribunals start handing out additional compensation to former students who were physically or sexually abused. In the past, he has publicly mused about hitting the $100-million mark. "Our evidence will support a payment of $70 million alone for the work we've already done," he says.

But Ottawa is balking, raising questions about just how many former students Merchant actually represents, and how much work his firm has really done on the files it does have. Government affidavits allege incidents of shoddy bookkeeping, questionable billing practices, and suggest that Merchant has many hundreds of phantom clients. Frank Iacobucci, a former Supreme Court justice now acting as the federal overseer of the residential school agreement, has declared that he has "very serious concerns about the information put forward by the Merchant Law Group to justify its position on legal fees." And a deal, struck last fall, to have a forensic accountant examine the firm's client base, files and bills, has fallen apart. Merchant, backed by the opinions of several provincial law societies, says the audits were a violation of solicitor-client privilege. And he's refusing to provide the government accountants with any more information. "We've complied with the verification process," says Merchant. "When we signed the deal there was never a word about pulling our files."

It's just the latest chapter in the saga of Tony Merchant vs. The World. In his own version, and to his many supporters, Merchant is a hero, one of the few people with the vision and drive to obtain justice for Aboriginals who were taken from their families and stripped of their language and culture in a state-sponsored assimilation. To his critics, including many native groups, he's a relentless self-promoter who exploited vulnerable clients in his quest for the big cheque. Merchant has been at the centre of controversy before, but this time, the stakes are huge. Across the country, an estimated 80,000 survivors are anxiously waiting for their compensation cheques. And Tony Merchant is taking a stand that won't make them happy: none of the victims are getting their money until he gets paid.

A NEW FIGHT OVER FEES COULD DELAY THE DEAL

Home base is still Regina, but Tony Merchant seems pretty comfortable around Parliament Hill these days. He flashes his spousal ID to bypass the security checkpoints, they know him by name in the parliamentary restaurant. When a reporter comes to visit, he arranges to meet in his wife's Senate offices. The walls are decorated with photos of Merchant, and sometimes Pana, with Pierre Trudeau, Jean Chrétien and other heavy hitters from the Liberal glory years. A thick packet of photocopied press clippings about Merchant's career sits on the coffee table. When the senator's conversation with her assistant, outside in the anteroom, becomes too distracting, he gets up and shuts the door. Power has its privileges. So, apparently, does being power's consort.



A HERO to some, an opportunist to others

Merchant's Liberal pedigree can be traced back several generations. His grandfather and mother were both members of the Saskatchewan legislature. He won election himself in 1975, and staged an unsuccessful bid for the provincial Liberal leadership the next year. Merchant has also run federally on three occasions, losing each time. He was an early supporter of Chrétien's leadership ambitions. (This time, he and his family are lining up behind Michael Ignatieff.) And it is accepted wisdom in Saskatchewan legal circles that during the Liberal years Merchant was able to influence who was appointed to the federal bench. "I've been able to make some contributions about ideas of people over time," he says coyly.

It was not, therefore, unexpected to see a Merchant appointed to the Senate in 2002. The surprise was that it was Pana, not Tony, going to the Red Chamber. "There were discussions," says Merchant, "but it would have been impossible unless I was prepared to back away from practice. And I wasn't ready to do that." Regardless, Pana's Senate appointment has proven to be something of a two-for-one deal. Merchant, who boasts that he and his wife have only spent seven nights apart in their 35-year marriage, is now an Ottawa fixture.

For all his connections and visibility, however, the one area where Merchant never felt he held much federal sway was the residential school file. Chrétien, a former Indian affairs minister, didn't understand the scope of the problem, he says. Paul Martin was more sympathetic, but movement toward a settlement came only in the dying days of his minority government. "I think the jig was up," says Merchant. "Our firm had a huge number of cases moving forward."

In the spring of 2005, Martin signed a political agreement on residential schools with the Assembly of First Nations and appointed Iacobucci as an official knuckle-breaker, tasked with making all the parties sit down and hammer out a deal. An agreement in principle was reached last November. After the January federal election, the new Tory government spent months tweaking the settlement, trying to make it more politically palatable for its voters. The final deal, signed in early May, provides a "common experience payment" (CEP) for all the living survivors of the 130 boarding schools—$10,000 for the first year they attended, and $3,000 for each additional year. (Those over 65 can already apply for a fast-tracked $8,000 advance on their compensation.) The landmark package also includes $125 million over five years for an Aboriginal Healing Foundation, $60 million for a truth and reconciliation commission, and $20 million for national and local commemorative projects. Sexual and physical abuse claims will

be dealt with under something called the Independent Assessment Process (IAP), a low-stress, simplified hearing that aims to resolve 2,500 cases a year. In return, survivors will agree to drop all other legal claims against the government and churches.

Ottawa has attached a $1.9-billion price tag to the deal, but the true cost of the settlement package will depend on how many survivors come forward to share their experiences. The IAP awards are expected to be more generous than prior out-of-court settlements, which ranged from $5,000 to $10,000 for milder cases of physical abuse, and up to $245,000 for repeated cases of rape and molestation. Merchant puts the true value of the deal at closer to $5 billion, which in turn will mean tens of millions more in compensation for lawyers.

The government has already put aside more than $100 million for legal fees, demolishing the previous Canadian record. (In 2000, a national class action settlement for people who contracted hepatitis C from blood transfusions paid lawyers $56 million.) According to the agreement in principle, the Merchant Law Group, with more than half of all current claimants, would get $40 million. The National Consortium—19 firms from across the country that have been pressing other class actions—will receive the same. Independent counsel—dozens of small firms and individual lawyers with residential school clients—will share the remaining $20 million. The lawyers involved have agreed not to deduct anything from their clients' CEP payouts, and to help any new claimants access the general compensation without charge.

The abuse payments are a different matter, however. Under the deal, the government will add 15 per cent to all amounts awarded by the IAP to help with legal fees, but lawyers remain free to deduct additional payments from their clients' compensation. Many survivors have contingency arrangements with their counsel, with some agreeing to hand over almost half of any settlement.

Legal fees are a touchy subject, and were reportedly a big sticking point for the Tories when they inherited the deal. The image of white lawyers raking in millions, while their poor native clients wait for cheques that might not even be enough to buy a new car, is not a palatable one. And there's no question that Merchant—a man who admits to having visited a reserve only six or seven times in his life—stands to be the biggest single winner. He wasn't the first lawyer in Canada to take on residential school cases, but whatever the exact number, he now has more than any one else, and his client list grows by five or six a day. In 2005, he won the biggest award to date for a native school victim when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a man who had been sexually abused by a Saskatchewan school administrator was entitled to compensation. (Or, as Merchant's son Matthew bluntly put it in a letter to a client: "We just took a case to the SCOC and got in excess of $300,000 for a Survivor who had been fondled three times.")



HE BILLED AN ASTOUNDING 5,300 HOURS LAST YEAR

Even Tony Merchant's fiercest critics concede that his legal strategy of flooding the courts with abuse claims—he has filed more than 6,000 individual lawsuits and 11 class actions over the past decade—helped force the reluctant churches and federal government to the bargaining table. For years, he helped keep the issue in the spotlight, giving interviews to newspapers, the BBC, CNN, even 60 Minutes II. In Merchant's telling, he's a crusader. And he's made one concession, at least, on his fees: his firm has decided, without being asked, he says, to take only 15 per cent of its clients' abuse awards, in addition to Ottawa's matching 15 per cent top up.

Still, with perhaps $100 million coming his way, it's the other picture, the one painted by his detractors—other lawyers, native groups, former clients—that seems destined to grab the headlines. Earlier this summer, even before the government's new allegations, Rosalind Caldwell, who runs an inner city ministry in Regina, called his share "misery" money, and demanded a portion be returned to disadvantaged Aboriginals. Tony Merchant is an opportunist, critics say, someone who aggressively recruits vulnerable clients, promises them the moon, and leaves them wondering what they are receiving in return for the hefty fees.

The red brick building still dominates the reserve. Three storeys high and unmistakably institutional, it's perched atop a small rise with a view of the Bow River and the rolling Alberta prairie beyond. Converted to a community college in 1971, its classrooms are still in use, but the chapel has been turned into a library. The basement playrooms are now a cafeteria. And the top-floor dormitory, where it must have been possible for students to gaze out the windows and see their family homes in the distance, is now the Siksika Nation Museum.

Between 1929 and the late 1960s, the Anglican Church educated thousands of Blackfoot children at the Old Sun residential school. And for many of those students, the memories are anything but happy. Ruth Majoros, now 65, arrived as a six-year-old, with no English and little understanding of white culture. She says it took her three years to learn to recog

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nize the name the Church gave her. Majoros's eyes fill with tears when she recalls the frequent beatings. "Even when we were 14 or 15 they used to strip us naked and spank us in front of everyone." Once when she bent down to pick up a pencil in class, her male teacher, thinking she was passing notes, pounced and shoved her into a desk. She ended up in hospital with a severe gash to her head and a broken arm. And when she returned to the school a month later, she was greeted with a spanking for being such an inconvenience. Fifteen years ago, Majoros signed up for some courses at the community college, but she didn't last a week. Just being in the building was enough to make her shake and cry.

When lawyers first came to Siksika, about an hour east of Calgary, in the late 1990s for a community meeting about potential compensation, Majoros was among a hundred or so curious participants. For many, that night was the first time they had ever discussed their experiences. It was cathartic, but few seemed to understand what they were getting into. "I signed the guest book, and next thing I knew, I had a lawyer," she says.

In 1999, changes to Alberta's legal limitations period sparked a flood of residential school lawsuits, as native groups and any lawyers were telling us how much money they could get for us—maybe $500,000," says Majoros. "Sorry to say that nobody got anything anywhere near that." A disgruntled former client of Merchant's, she is now a competitor, shepherding groups of fellow survivors through the settlement process, free of charge.

Those who were already Merchant clients were frequently encouraged to provide names of relatives and friends who had also attended



A FORMER SUPREME COURT JUSTICE HAS 'VERY SERIOUS CONCERNS'



MERCHANT meets with a client in his Regina office (top), one site of abuse has been turned into a community college

number of law firms rushed to enter claims before they were deemed to be too old to pursue. The Merchant Law Group stepped up to the plate, paying the $200 a-claim fee and filing thousands of suits before the deadline. (At one point, Merchant recalls, his firm was spending more than $20,000 a day at the courthouse.) In Siksika, Merchant took over some clients from a small, independent law firm, and signed up hundreds more. Soon, he and his firm represented most of the survivors on the reserve.

Hopes for compensation for the years of mistreatment, and the decades of after-effects, were high, but few of the survivors on the reserve seemed to understand how long, complex, and costly the legal battle could be. "The

residential schools. Craig Weaselhead received a 2004 letter, in care of his uncle, with an attached questionnaire asking about his residential school experiences. ("Were you hit? What was the effect of being hit? Who hit you? What were you hit with?" asks the form, identified as the Merchant Law Group's Residential School Initial Interview. Under the heading of sexual abuse, it asks, "Who touched you? What part of their body touched which part of your body?" and provides a helpful example. "*His hand touched my genitals. His penis penetrated my anus. Her hand fondled my genitals, or whatever.*") The letter, signed by Matthew Merchant, seems to promise a guaranteed return. "All you need to do is answer the questionnaire and be sure that we know where to find you so that when the case resolves in a year-and-a half, or two-and-a-half years or three-and-a half-years we can find you to get to you the compensation to which you are entitled."

Many Siksika clients say that despite the promises, little progress was being made on their cases, and updates from the Merchant Law Group lawyers were few and far between.

"For me, out of all those years, I only got two letters from him," says Donna Littlelight, another former Old Sun student. "That man never did anything for us." (Merchant blames the slow progress on the courts and government. "Alberta became a judicial black hole," he says, as his lawsuit flood was diverted into a lengthy case management process. His firm wanted to proceed individually; the Crown and courts wanted to try the cases in bunches.)

Regardless of who bears responsibility, frustration grew in Siksika as claimants died without ever seeing their cases resolved. Majoros learned of an alternative dispute resolution program that the government had set up to quickly settle residential school cases. (She claims that neither Merchant's office, nor the band's legal department, had ever mentioned it to her or other survivors as an option. Merchant, who calls the ADR program "cruel," says that he never recommends it, and depending on the client's circumstances may not even tell them it exists.) Majoros collected the necessary information, filled in the forms, and took a group of 19 friends and relatives through the out-of-court process. Once the compensation cheques started arriving, more and more survivors asked to join. She is now preparing her third group for their hearings, and has close to 200 more former students on a waiting list. Almost all are former Merchant clients. "We don't say that we fired him, because that's not a very nice word," says Majoros.

The confidentiality rules governing the relationship between lawyers and their current and former clients make it impossible for Merchant to respond directly to the complaints, but he questions the motives of his critics, noting that a competing firm now has a satellite office in Siksika. "It's interesting

that the only First Nation in Canada where we have a problem is one of the few that has a lawyer right there on the reserve."

But the Merchant Law Group has not let its former clients go without a fight. It papered the reserve with letters advising survivors that someone was "manipulating the people of Siksika to do a very unwise thing." The ADR process is "largely a trick," wrote Tony Merchant. The letters also contained a warning: the firm wouldn't wait for a settlement—all clients who found new lawyers would be expected to pay their outstanding accounts immediately. Those who persisted received bills for thousands of dollars.

Peter Cayen, now 77, spent 11 years as a student at the reserve's Catholic-run Crowfoot Indian Residential School. Sitting on his front porch, he's comfortable enough talking about the beatings inflicted by staff and other students, but he draws the line at discussing the sexual abuse. "I don't want to say those things in front of other guys." When Cayen fired Merchant in October 2005, he received an invoice for $8,217.72. Interest on any unpaid balance would be 27 per cent, it warned. "I got worried. I got scared of them," he says. The itemized bill, stretching back to 1999, shows an initial one hour and 20 minute consultation with Cayen, and then three letters over a six-year period. Most charges on the seven-page bill are for the mass Alberta case management meetings. An examination for discovery was finally held in June 2005. Last February, months after he dismissed Merchant, Cayen says he got a call from the firm's Calgary offices telling him to come and pick up a cheque. He met with a paralegal and signed an "irrevocable direction" authorizing the government to pay the Merchant Law Group $2,750, settling his case. He was then sent home empty-handed. "Good thing I had enough gas in my car," says Cayen. Months later, he got a cheque for $500, the only payment he has received to date from the firm. Cayen has given up hope of getting more.

Merchant has aggressively pursued his former clients in other jurisdictions as well. In October 2005, he convinced a Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench judge to order the government to pay all future residential school awards due to two survivors—including their common experience payments—into the court so that his bills, $4,500 and $7,500, could be satisfied first. The Crown is appealing the case.

In a sworn affidavit filed in court last January, Ron Manyheads, the manager of the Siksika Nation Justice Service, complained that Merchant's collection attempts were "creating an atmosphere of uncertainty as well as creating feelings of intimidation" in the community. He attached several examples of the letters, as well as communications with Tony Merchant. The band questioned how the firm could double dip—billing former clients and collecting $40 million in legal fees under the settlement agreement. "Merchant Law Group has an arrangement by which our fees *for our clients* will be paid by the government," was the response. Merchant's letter invoked the Saskatchewan court ruling, and said the band should be advising its people to return to the firm's fold. If not, the consequences were clear. "[W]e are going to get the $40M and we are going to get more money as well."



WHEN CAYEN fired Merchant, he received a $8,217.72 bill with a 27 per cent interest rate

If there is living proof of the maxim that there is no such thing as bad publicity, chances are that his name is Tony Merchant. Over the past 35 years, he has survived, and thrived through a series of headline-making brushes with the police, judges, and law societies, and never lost his taste for battle. In January 1983, Regina police charged Merchant with abduction after he helped his friend and client Colin Thatcher forcibly remove his nine-year-old daughter Stephanie from the home of a family friend. Stephanie's mother, and Thatcher's ex-wife, JoAnn Wilson, had been savagely beaten and shot in the garage of her Regina home the evening before. Thatcher is still serving time for her murder. Merchant, who represented his former political colleague in the acrimonious divorce and custody battle, later pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of mischief and was granted an absolute discharge. The Law Society of Saskatchewan reprimanded him for "conduct unbecoming" and fined him $1,000, and $5,000 in costs.

Merrilee Rasmussen, a Regina lawyer, says the first thing she asks when she takes on a family law case is whether she's up against Tony Merchant. "His personal credo is that he doesn't settle anything," she says. "It's fight at all costs." In a recent Ontario court battle to see which law firms would be allowed to participate in a class action against the makers of Vioxx, the judge criticized Merchant for submitting "scandalous" statements, alleging that his competition had sold out their clients in the past. His conduct, including dumping thousands of pages of "largely irrelevant" material on an opposing lawyer just before 5 p.m. the evening before the hearing, left many scratching their heads. "We filed our material six months before the date," says Mike Peerless, a London, Ont., class action specialist. "This type of thing isn't usually a blood sport."

In 1998, a Tax Court judge slammed Merchant for "stonewalling" Revenue Canada auditors who tried to reassess his taxes. When the court ordered him to disclose his financial documents, he dragged his heels, then submitted an avalanche of disorganized papers, including a list of 16,000 items with no description or explanation. When he pressed the case to the Federal Court of Appeal, the three-judge panel criticized his "unacceptable conduct" and disrespect before the court. At particular issue were Merchant's efforts to file a legal memorandum that exceeded the court's 30-page limit. After it was twice rejected, he changed the page margins and filed the same argument in eye-straining, extra-small type.

The Merchant legend has been further burnished by his eccentricities. In his days at the University of Saskatchewan, he was known for not wearing shoes, even in the middle of winter (perhaps explaining the nickname "Tippy Toes"). He owns 35 suits, all of them in a style-defying double-breasted cut, and only wears white shirts with French cuffs. He is also a self-confessed cheapskate, proudly sharing the tale of how his mother purchased his wife's engagement ring. That may also explain why he's currently embroiled in a lawsuit with Saskatchewan's provincial auto insurance body. At issue is a refused claim for $1,450 in repairs to the interior of Pana's 1999 Oldsmobile, for damage caused by his son Matthew's dog, a black Labrador retriever named Bobs (in the fashion of all 19 Labs the family has ever owned, stretching back to 1922).

To some extent, Merchant enjoys the notoriety. "It's part of being larger than life in Saskatchewan," he says. Nor does it seem to bother him that his detractors are so vociferous that it sometimes feels like the meetings of the Tony Merchant fan club could be held in a phone booth. "I have always been strong medicine," he says. "I've always been impatient about doing the things I want to do. I've been unhappy since I was 12 that I was going to die."

Native groups have been complaining since the late 1990s about the way some lawyers have been recruiting the often emotionally vulnerable survivors of residential schools. In his first term as grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine wrote to all of the country's law societies and bar associations, begging them to rein in their more aggressive colleagues. Only the Canadian Bar Association responded, adopting a set of voluntary, non-binding guidelines that say in part that lawyers should not initiate communications with former students, or inquire whether they were sexually assaulted.

Tony Merchant can speak movingly about the stories he has heard from clients over the years. "You'd think you'd get used to it, but on probably a dozen occasions a year, I have to leave my office because my eyes are watering," he says. His outrage shines through, as does his pride in being part of the historic settlement of their claims. "First Nations peoples were perfect victims," says Merchant. "They suffered in silence. It is part of their culture to be strong about bad things. It isn't the amount of money that makes people feel better, it's the monetary recognition. When they get that $1,800 and a letter of apology, they are satisfied. It's sort of like they feel that someone has been fined."

In no small way, Merchant sees himself as an evangelist. Survivors should be made aware they have legal options, that they are entitled to compensation for what happened, whether it's a small amount or a big one, he says. That's one of the reasons he has always made himself so available to the media, and especially those outlets with large First Nations audiences. On this day, he breaks off an interview to take a call from CBC North. It is a happy intersection of duty and business, says Merchant. "They get 20-second sound bites and I get to say Merchant Law Group all the time on the only radio station anybody listens to north of Prince Albert." All of the firm's offices have easy-to-remember phone numbers ending in the same digits—7777. Type www.residentialschools.ca into an Internet browser and you end up at Merchant's website.

But that zeal to spread the word has caused problems. In 2000, the Law Society of Saskatchewan convened a disciplinary hearing over letters Merchant sent to two survivors in the fall of 1998. "We believe the compensation that we can achieve for you will be significant and you have nothing to lose," said the unsolicited pitches. "For sexual assault, the amount of compensation could be $50,000, $75,000, or $150,000 so a lot is at stake." One of the recipients told the law society panel that she became ill after receiving the letter, suffering nightmares, missing work and ultimately seeking psychological help for her fear that others would learn of the abuse she had suffered. The committee declared the letters "reasonably capable of misleading the intended recipient," severely reprimanding Merchant, and fining him $5,000 as well as $10,000 in costs. He appealed and lost.

Merchant was unapologetic, and blasted the country's law societies for being too timid to support his "cutting edge work." If the regulators had their way, he says, every letter to a client would read like a prospectus. "Lawyers are good at making rules." (In February 2006, the law society again found Merchant guilty of misleading communications, this time for letters he sent to residents of the town of Estevan following a 2004 train derailment. At the same hearing, he was also found guilty of withdrawing or authorizing the withdrawal of trust funds without consent. In June, he was given a two-week suspension from practice and fined more than $60,000. He is appealing the decision.)

The way firms recruit former students is a long-standing problem, says Sharon Thira, executive director of British Columbia's Residential Schools Survivors Society. "We've had situations where lawyers went into communities, set up a table, and started collecting names. Many of the survivors didn't even realize that they were signing retainer agreements," she says. In 2000, her organization complained to the provincial law society about the activities of two Merchant Group lawyers who had held meetings on a number of reserves in southern B.C. "When they left, there were a number of people who went into crisis," says Thira. "Some survivors haven't talked about the residential school experience in 30 or 40 years. It can create a flood of emotions." The firm said its lawyers had been invited by band members, and the complaint was dismissed in May 2001 after the law society determined that no rules had been broken. (The British Columbia bar has yet to adopt any specific guidelines for dealing with residential school clients.)



THE AGREEMENT SAYS LAWYERS GET PAID FIRST, THEN THE VICTIMS, MERCHANT NOTES



WITH friend/client Colin Thatcher (top), and his prized Jag

Merchant's volume business with residential school clients has also raised the hackles of other lawyers. "He's done an amazing thing with this file, getting himself $40 million, for frankly not $40 million of work," says Laura Cabott, a Whitehorse practitioner. Cabott, who represents about 300 former students, says each case requires a tremendous amount of legwork and direct contact. And her role is frequently as much counsellor as counsel, as emotional clients seek support and reassurance. "Merchant says he has 9,000 clients, which makes it impossible to service those people the way you are supposed to," she says. "It's just not the right way to practise law."

There has also been considerable confusion about just how many residential school clients Merchant actually represents. A class action he filed in Alberta in September 2005 had a list of names that stretches 440 pages. But other lawyers have found many of their own clients included in Merchant's tally. Peter Grant, a Vancouver lawyer who represented independent counsel at the residential school bargaining table, says about 10 per cent of his clients were mistakenly listed as Merchant's, and that several other firms have had the same problem. In some cases, payouts have been delayed as the government tries to figure out just who is representing the survivor. "All of a sudden you can't settle because there's a court action somewhere else," he says. The elderly clients often have no recollection of ever signing up with Merchant's firm.

As Merchant himself notes, anyone with as long a career, and as many clients as he has, is bound to have rubbed some people the wrong way. He referred *Maclean's* to three clients who might provide a more balanced picture. Christine Semple, a survivor of the MacKay Residential School in Dauphin, Man., says she trusts Merchant more than any other lawyer. The process has been a lengthy one, and she is still awaiting compensation, but Semple has never lost faith. Those who complain about his share of the settlement simply don't understand how much work he has done. "People are always trying to dig up dirt on the good people," she says. "He's a god in my eyes." Flora Northwest, who spent a decade at the Ermineskin School on the Hobbema reserve, has referred more than 100 fellow survivors from the Samson Cree Nation to the Merchant Law Group. She blames the slow pace of her case on the government. "Tony's worked on my case for 8½ years. He deserves the money."



MERCHANT ADDS FIVE OR SIX NEW CLIENTS A DAY



PRENTICE (left, with Phil Fontaine) blasted an unnamed law firm for delays. Many say he was referring to Merchant.

But Jane Glennon, a Saskatchewan resident who attended the Guy Hill Residential School in Manitoba, seemed surprised to be getting a call about the Merchant Law Group. "I haven't been getting any kind of meaningful feedback from them. It's a slow process." Glennon, who was named as a representative plaintiff in one of the firm's class actions, says she has no idea where her file stands. She's currently shopping around for another lawyer. "I really don't understand why he'd have you call me," she says.

In the four months after the federal election, the residential schools settlement went through 27 new drafts. What went on behind closed doors remains something of a mystery, but in early April, Jim Prentice, the Indian affairs minister, blasted an unnamed law firm for "dragging its feet" and holding up the final deal. Tony Merchant says it wasn't him, but several others who were at the table point the finger squarely at the Merchant Law Group.

One of the few significant changes between the agreement in principle and the final deal is the language about Merchant's compensation. Gone were the references to the $40 million. Instead, the settlement says his fees "will be determined" and verified as per a new, separate side agreement called "Schedule V" (Merchant Law Group is the only firm being held to this standard of proof). That one page agreement doesn't mention Merchant's client files, but it does specify that government-hired auditors were to review his dockets, computer records of work in progress, and "any other evidence" relevant to his claimed legal fees. And it sets his firm's fees at no less than $25 million and no more than $40 million.

In an interview earlier this summer, Frank Iacobucci was tight-lipped about the dispute, but clear on the government's position. "We will not be paying fees unless the fees are satisfactorily presented to us," he said. Before courts in the nine jurisdictions give their final stamps of approval to the deal, the former Supreme Court justice was supposed to sign an affidavit attesting that all the legal fees being charged are "fair and reasonable." But that's a far cry from what he recently submitted to the courts in Saskatchewan and Ontario. Iacobucci cited "uncertainty" about the Merchant Law Group's actual number of clients, a "lack of evidence or rationale" to support claims of $80 million worth of work in progress, and "an apparent discrepancy between the amount of class action work MLG represented it had carried out and the amount of class action work it had actually done." Iacobucci attached a Department of Justice review of a Saskatchewan residential school class action lawsuit filed by Merchant Law Group that discovered 264 of the named plaintiffs had already settled, eight had gone to trial,

TOM HANSON/CP



and 84 names were duplicates. (That exhibit was ruled inadmissable as he had not identified the exact source of the unproven allegations.)

A government affidavit from Edward Nagle, a senior manager with Deloitte & Touche's forensic accounting group, detailed what auditors found before Merchant refused further access to his files this past January. The firm was only able to supply retainer agreements for 4,823 of its then 8,560 purported clients. Nagle states that his team was never allowed "unsupervised" access to the Merchant Group's records, and that its review of work product was restricted to a "cursory" look at four files, handpicked by the firm. All the same, the auditors note several problems with the documentation they did receive. Work-in-progress reports showed "multiple time and disbursement entries" made on Feb. 1, 2004, pertaining to work done over the prior six years, including one charge for 1,200 hours of a single lawyer's time in a "Settlement Conference." (The Merchant Law Group says the charges were due to the conversion from an older billing system.) Nagle also questions why Merchant was charging residential school clients $750 an hour for his work "in contrast to $450 per hour charged by him on an apparently unrelated engagement."

Merchant has responded with a 248-paragraph, 61-page affidavit from his firm's executive director, Donald Outerbridge, refuting the allegations, appending several dozen photocopies of newspaper and magazine articles about his career as proof of his expertise, accomplishments and sterling reputation. Outerbridge goes into great detail about the financial burden the residential school work has put on the firm. Several partners, including Merchant, provided loans to keep the business afloat. The firm was overdrawn on its main line of credit 17 times in 2005, and 19 times in 2004, says the affidavit. Payroll day was always a scramble, and the phones were cut off for non-payment on at least one occasion. And he provides a very different version of what went on during the closed-door negotiations, painting a picture of government duplicity and strong-arm tactics. He suggests that the firm settled for $40 million in the agreement in principle—less than it claims it's entitled to—in part because it worried Stephen Harper would win the election and put an end to the deal. Negotiations were fractious and Iacobucci became "anger [sic] and ill-tempered during discussions."

Although it was the Assembly of First Nations that reportedly pushed the issue of legal fees at the table, Phil Fontaine, a former student himself, is treading lightly when it comes to First Nations complaints, and the government's ongoing battle with Merchant. "We have been very, very careful not to interfere with the privileged relationship between lawyers and clients," he says. "We would never advise survivors to fire their lawyers, but we also let them know that they can if they wish." Fontaine allows that he has "heard stories" about "some lawyers," but says that's a problem for the law societies to deal with. The main concern for the AFN these days is what will happen to First Nations communities after the lawyers take their cut and the compensation starts flowing. "There's going to be a lot of money out there and it's going to attract good and bad people," says Fontaine. "We want to inform communities and try to protect the elders."

Others who were at the table say the focus on legal fees is misguided. Kirk Baert, a lawyer with Toronto's Koskie Minsky, part of the national consortium, says the final figure is far less than what the standard class action payout—three or four times the lawyers' docketed time—would be. Besides, it was a tough fight. "If it was so easy, why didn't all the other law firms in Canada do it?" asks Baert. "If the people who are on about the size of the legal fees can think of a better system to litigate these cases, I'd like to hear about it."

But as long as Merchant and the feds are squabbling over his $40-million bill, legal fees—not the historic deal—will continue to make the headlines. The settlement agreement says the lawyers get paid first, then the victims, notes Merchant. "You can't do anything else." So residential school survivors across the country are now left guessing about when—or if—they will get their compensation cheques. "Merchant can definitely slow the deal down, but I think it's unlikely he'll be able to kill it," says one Ontario lawyer involved in the process. "But the really sad part is that five survivors die every day that people hold this up."

What's strange is that, as aggressive as Merchant has been about protecting his firm's residential school turf, there's a sense that on a personal level he may not even care that much about the actual dollars and cents. Compared to many successful lawyers, he lives modestly. A shiny grey Jaguar and a taste for Hermès ties are the only evidence of high living. The recipient of the biggest payday in Canadian legal history says he has no firm plans for the money. Except that he won't be retiring.

What really seems to matter to him is that he gets credit for the win. On a recent Monday morning, there were five rambling voice mails from Merchant waiting on my phone. Each message ran out the tape. "Much has been written favourably about me as a person. Candid, intelligent, loyal, organized, goal-organized and productive, made for television", "mixed with the crusader is great determination made effective by financial capacity". "I'm a brown belt in karate." There were passing references to topless rights activists, *The Rockford Files*, and 18th-century liberalism. "I spoke in Arabia on a number of occasions. I was in the navy. I was co-editor of my student newspaper. I have a lifetime record of 102 wins and two losses as a debater." In one message, Merchant listed his five Supreme Court appearances in declining order of importance. "There's a theme here of what matters to me as an individual." Each voicemail picked up where the last had left off, often in mid-sentence. One seamless, if extremely odd, 10-minute statement of principles. The clock on the phone showed the messages had been left hours apart, over the course of three days. M

jonathon.gatehouse@macleans.rogers.com

'HE'S A GOD IN MY EYES,' DECLARES ONE CLIENT



THE SELF-CONFESSED cheapskate boasts his mom paid for his wife's engagement ring





BORDER TIE-UPS and duplicate regulations are major concerns for the council

MEET NAFTA 2.0

Forget sweeping trade deals, CEOs have a new road map to the future

BY LUIZA CH. SAVAGE • Ron Covais is in a hurry. The president of the Americas for defence giant Lockheed Martin, and a former Pentagon adviser to Dick Cheney, he's one of a cherry picked group of executives who were whisked to Cancun in March by the leaders of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, and asked to come up with a plan for taking North American integration beyond NAFTA. Covais figures they've got less than two years of political will to make it happen. That's when the Bush administration exits, and "The clock will stop if the Harper minority government falls or a new government is elected." In Cancun, the executives gathered behind closed doors in a luxury hotel and vented about slow borders, duplicate regulations and the competitive threat from the European Union and Asia. "It was an intimate discussion. It was a lot of fun, there were no reporters, just a freewheeling discussion on the things that drive you crazy," recalls Annette Verschuren, the president of Home Depot Canada, who flew in on Harper's jet and said the PM was "very engaged."

The leaders organized the CEOs into a formal advisory body, the North American Competitiveness Council. In June, they met in Washington, with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, Mexican Economy Minister Sergio Garcia de Alba, and Canada's Industry Minister Maxime Bernier, who asked for help in solving the "bottlenecks" created by laws and regulations. "The guidance from the ministers was, 'tell us what we need to do and we'll make it happen,'" recalls Covais, who chairs the U.S. section of the council, which includes 10 CEOs of big companies like Wal-Mart, General Motors and Merck. The Canadian section, chaired by Linda Hasenfratz, CEO of Guelph-based autoparts maker Linamar Corp., includes executives from such heavyweights as Bell Canada, Suncor, CN, Power Corp., and Scotiabank.

The executives have boiled their priorities down to three: the Canadian CEOs are focusing on "border crossing facilitation," the Americans have taken on "regulatory convergence," and the Mexicans are looking at "energy integration" in everything from electrical grids to the locating of liquid natural gas terminals. They plan to present recommendations to the ministers in October.

This is how the future of North America now promises to be written: not in a sweeping trade agreement on which elections will turn, but by the accretion of hundreds of incremental changes implemented by executive agencies, bureaucracies and regulators. "We've decided not to recommend any things that would require legislative changes," says Covais. "Because we won't get anywhere."

In his Crystal City, Va., office, Covais keeps a black binder of proposals from American business. Some are specific: the adoption of American container sizes for baby food; a common list of "hazardous substances"; continental standards for food labelling. Others are sweeping: everyone should follow the U.S. lead of requiring federal regulators to base their regulations on the voluntary standards of private industry.

Regulatory harmonization has long been championed by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, and was endorsed by a task force co-chaired by former Liberal industry minister John Manley in 2005. But critics fear the current approach will mean lowest-common denominator regulations, a process dominated by U.S. interests, and an enlargement of NAFTA by stealth. "These are issues that need to be discussed, but not resolved behind closed doors with input only from big business," says Jean-Yves Lefort, trade campaigner for the Council of Canadians.

Bernier told *Maclean's* he's pleased so far. "We have many of Canada's key business leaders at the table. They are working hard to represent the interests of Canadian business and all Canadians." Their recommendations will be considered along with "other advice and input," he said, as the three governments move forward on the "Security and Prosperity Partnership" launched in 2005.

Still others complain the approach is too timid. Robert Pastor, director of the Center for North American Studies at American University in Washington, said the leaders should launch broad consultations on major moves, like a common external tariff and a continental transportation network. "None of these big issues are being discussed. Instead we have a CEO council that is looking at the issue one regulation at a time," he said. But the CEOs say they have a strategy. "Let's get some low hanging fruit to give the thing some momentum," says Hasenfratz. "But let's not lose sight of bigger-ticket items." M

CRITICS SAY HARMONIZING RULES WILL MEAN A RACE TO THE BOTTOM, AND U.S. INTERESTS DOMINATING

ON THE WEB *For more Luiza Ch. Savage, visit her blog at* **www.macleans.ca/luizasavage**

FOR THE RECORD

THE FITNESS MINISTER'S DOUGHNUT DIET

"There's nothing unique about me. There's lots of people who sit around and watch television and eat too much and love doughnuts and hamburgers like I do."—B.C.'s new Minister of Fitness Gordon Hogg, 60, who at five foot ten and 225 lb. has announced he is 40 lb. overweight but plans to lose only half that in order to serve as a credible front man for Premier Gordon Campbell's new healthy living and fitness initiative in the province

WILL KINCAID/AP



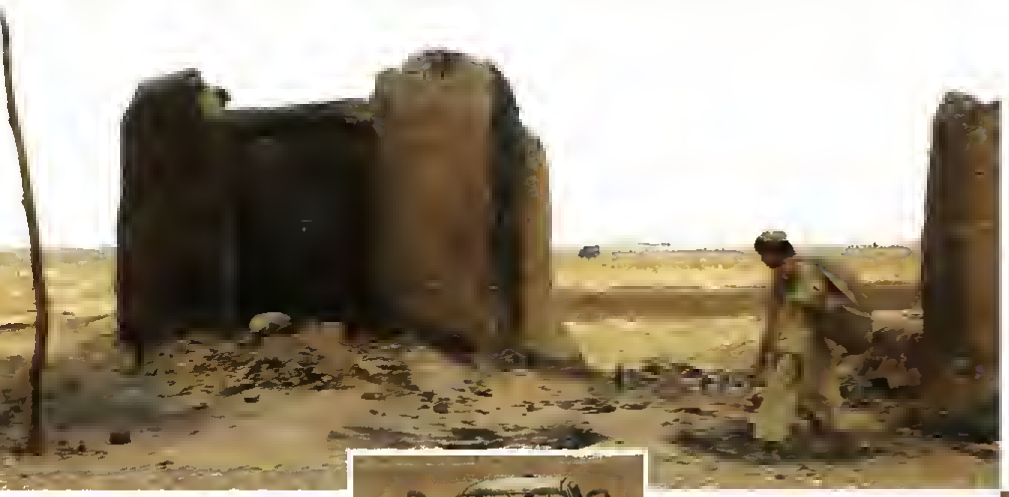
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SHIFT_

THE VIEW FROM AMBUSH ALLEY



With a stranglehold on a key village, the Taliban dares the Canadians to attack

BY ADNAN R. KHAN

A decisive battle is coming. In an unusual moment of frankness, Canada's outgoing battalion commander in Afghanistan, Lt.-Col. Ian Hope, has thrown down the gauntlet, warning the Taliban that the Canadians are coming for them. "They want to directly challenge us and that is a fatal mistake," Hope told *Maclean's* at Kandahar airfield, home to Canada's 2,000 plus troops in southern Afghanistan. "If they wish to go to conventional fighting, they've chosen the wrong army. They have this belief that if they build it, we will come. Well, we will." Following weeks of intense fighting in Kandahar province, Hope's message is clear: Canada has had enough of piecemeal fights that have taken an unprecedented toll on Canadian troops, and accomplished little.

In August alone, eight soldiers lost their lives and dozens more were injured, largely in the villages just west of Kandahar city



CANADIAN troops are forced to elude machine-gun fire and grenades on Highway 1

Highway 1, the main artery leading through the area, is now called "ambush alley" by Canadian soldiers who face a consistent barrage of rocket-propelled grenades and machine gun fire whenever they travel along it. Battles in the district, which is the heart of the Taliban movement, continue almost daily. One 60 hour firefight in July was dubbed the Battle of Pashmul. Another major operation, launched on Aug. 18 and intended to wrest back control of Highway 1 from the Taliban, managed to kill dozens of insurgents, according to Canadian military sources, but did little to dent the stranglehold the Taliban have over the region.

That's because the key town, Pashmul, 40 km west of Kandahar city and the command centre for the Taliban in southern Kandahar, has held firm despite continuous fighting. This, according to Hope, is where the decisive battle will take place. And the Taliban say they are ready for it. "We want the *kharjan* to come," says one fighter in Pashmul, who, like most of the Taliban, uses the Pashto word for "foreigner" to refer to Canadian troops. "So far, they have only sent small forces to the village. They fight for a few hours and then run away. We want them to send a big force—so we can finish them off." It is a message the fighter wants *Maclean's* to convey to the Canadian leadership, but Hope scoffs at the challenge. The battle will come, he says, but "at a time of our choosing."

That time may be drawing close. The importance of Pashmul, just off Highway 1, cannot be understated, both in terms of strategic and psychological value. During the Russian occupation, the town was a command centre for Afghan mujahedeen fighting the Soviets. In the current conflict, Pashmul, according to Hope, has become the avatar for the next phase of the Taliban's insurgency. "They've realized that living in caves in mountains means nothing," he says, "and that if they want to be a credible option for people, they need to be near the political centre. Kandahar city is the political heart of southern Afghanistan."

ADNAN R. KHAN

Occupying ground and holding it gives the Taliban much-needed prestige in the eyes of the local population. And Pashmul, with its history and strategic location, is the ideal candidate. Taking it would deliver a severe blow to the insurgents. But that will be no easy task. I was taken into the Pashmul area by a local farmer with ties to the Taliban. During my brief time in the village, it became very clear that the Taliban have dug in for a serious fight. Strictly speaking, this is no longer a village—it is an armed camp. Women and children have fled. Every street is manned with checkpoints. Local men have taken up arms, many of them walking around the warren of streets with two Kalashnikov assault rifles slung over their shoulders, entering and exiting homes that have become operational headquarters. Fighting the Taliban in this environment will be extremely difficult.

The Taliban's first line of defence is 1½ km north of Pashmul, an array of sentries scattered through the grape, corn and marijuana fields that flank Highway 1. Disguised as farmers, they wait and watch for convoys and communicate their approach back to central command in Pashmul, which then mounts an ambush. A local baker who has managed to keep his shop on Highway 1 open in spite of the regular battles describes how the Taliban operate. "They've set this entire stretch of road up for ambushes," he says. He points to an eight-foot tall mud wall just off the highway, a section of which has been reduced to about five feet in height. "A few weeks ago, they knocked down the top half of that wall so they can shoot over it." The shopkeeper also describes how the Taliban regularly set up checkpoints on the highway and occasionally "arrest" people they believe work for the government. An hour before I arrived in the area, one of these checkpoints captured a busload of Afghan doctors (they were later released, according to Taliban and government sources).

How can the Taliban operate so brazenly in an area literally next door to Kandahar's capital? Their ability to communicate quickly, says Hope, gives them a huge advantage. "Cutting the lines of communication is extremely important in shaping a battle," he adds. But in the age of mobile technology, enforcing zero communication on an enemy is virtually impossible. Armed with cellphones, Taliban sentries are only a call away from alerting their commanders of an impending attack. In one incident on Highway 1, a Canadian convoy is spotted by a Taliban

MANY LOCAL MEN ARE ARMED NOW—A KALASHNIKOV RIFLE SLUNG OVER EACH SHOULDER





ADNAN R. KHAN (TOP) CP

'THEY WANT to challenge us and that is a fatal mistake,' say Lt.-Col. Ian Hope

fighter who is escorting me. He speed-dials his commander. "Lunch is on its way," he says, describing the line of LAV III armoured vehicles, Bisons and a military tanker heading southwest toward Pashmul. The exchange takes 30 seconds, after which the fighter tells me that if there is still enough time, and a large enough contingent of fighters in position, insurgents farther down the highway will scramble for an ambush, perhaps lay a roadside bomb if they have one at the ready.

This time, though, there is no attack. But on numerous occasions over the past weeks, there have been. And there is a pattern. Once Canadian soldiers enter the danger zone along Highway 1, they must travel south through lush green fields to reach Pashmul. Taliban sentries will have already alerted fighters about the troops' location. Those fighters then converge on the area, using the crops, which are high because it's the height of the growing season, for cover. Their tactics are simple: creep through the foliage to mount an attack, and then retreat. If pursued, stash your weapon and pick up a farming tool. In seconds, fighters transform into farmers, making it extremely difficult for Canadian troops to differentiate between civilians and combatants.

The majority of Canada's assaults on Pashmul have been limited to fighting along Highway 1 and the fields that surround it. But during the few incursions into Pashmul village itself, the Canadians have met fierce resistance. One problem is in the way the village has been laid out: it is effectively a fortress, the culmination of centuries-old tribal traditions that value privacy and guard against attacks by other tribes. Close-knit compounds surrounded by mud walls impenetrable to bullets are a formidable challenge to any invading army. Narrow alleyways can easily become death traps for soldiers caught in ambushes by attackers on rooftops. House-to-house battles may be the only way to take the village, but that will be a costly approach. And even if Pashmul is won, holding it will present an entirely new array of difficulties.

"But we've already been in there," says Hope, referring to the six incursions the Canadians have made into Pashmul. "We've fought the Taliban in the compounds and in the grape fields, with great success. Each time we've had temporary effects. The next time we go in we'll have a more enduring effect."

ONE SIGNIFICANT operation in Pashmul, on Aug. 2-3, cannot be called a great success. True, over the course of those two days Canadian forces dispersed scores of Taliban, inflicting significant casualties and killing a medium-level commander, as Hope points out. But during the course of the day long battle on Aug. 3, Canada lost four soldiers, and 10 more sustained injuries. The bulk of Canadian casualties were sustained during a firefight in which troops from the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry occupied an abandoned school on the outskirts of Pashmul. Once inside, they were surrounded by Taliban fighters who laid siege for hours before the Canadians were able to egress out. For the Taliban and villagers who spoke to *Maclean's*,

that battle was a huge victory "We destroyed two of their tanks [i e LAV III light armoured vehicles] and killed or injured many of their soldiers," says one villager who refused to give his name for fear of government reprisals

But what really happened? Accounts differ Canadian sources say our soldiers went in to Pashmul answering a request for help from local farmers, and that according to solid intelligence, the school was being used by the Taliban as a base But a Taliban fighter told *Maclean's* that the battle at the school was pre-planned by Taliban commanders, and that no one had been using the school "We purposely left it unoccupied because we wanted the *kharijan* army to take it," he said "Then we surrounded it and killed a number of their soldiers"

In the fog of war, determining the truth is often near to impossible But there seems to be little doubt that Canadian forces were set up on Aug 3 "We drew them in," says another fighter in Pashmul "We had prepared the school in advance with land mines and

CAMOUFLAGE Vineyards, orchards and marijuana fields provide cover for Taliban fighters





had an attack strategy ready once the *kharijan* were inside" Reports from Canadian soldiers who fought in the battle confirm this, some told the Canadian Press shortly after the bloody fight that the attackers had put together a well-planned ambush

The Canadian military's official statement on the incident claims that their operation was a response to local villagers requesting assistance from the Afghan government against the Taliban who, the statement claims, were preventing farmers from getting their grape harvest out to market "That is true," says Hope "They've been asking the government for three weeks to remove the Taliban so they can get their grapes out"

Such a request may well have been made, but it may have been a ruse Villagers say it certainly did not come from them "Why would the Taliban prevent us from making our living?" says one, refusing to give his name also for fear of government reprisals "The Taliban are farmers Many of the fighters in Pashmul are local farmers The fighting disturbs our work but we blame the *kharijan* for that If they leave, the fighting will end The Taliban are defending us They help us get the grapes out They warn us when there is going to be an attack and tell us when it is safe to move." And on the ground, the harvest season appeared to be running smoothly On Highway 1 in the Pashmul area, at least half a dozen trucks were in the process of being loaded with grapes when I drove through

In a place such as Kandahar, it would certainly be difficult for the Canadian military to get proper intelligence Sources on the ground, informants and spies are tough to come by in an area with fanatical tribal allegiances To make matters worse, the Taliban, keenly aware that Canadians need informants, are sending out their own people armed with misinformation Is this what happened in Pashmul? "It is possible that someone in the village working for the Taliban told the *kharijan* to come," says a villager with close ties to the Taliban "They've asked me to tell the Afghan army to come to Pashmul so they can attack them It is a tactic the Taliban are using"

Not all villagers in Kandahar are necessarily Taliban supporters Some can be bought, while others can be convinced that the Taliban will lose the insurgency and it's in their interest to be allied to the winning side The problem is convincing people that the winning side is working in their interest. Most villagers haven't seen an alternative to the Taliban, and so have nothing against which to measure the quality of their lives—except what they see on television, from Hollywood or Bollywood or music video stations, all featuring vivid explosions of sexuality So many Afghans turn to the Taliban for the familiarity of tradition They fight or provide housing and food for fighters, convinced by their limited experience that the *kharijan* have come to corrupt their society But some remain curious about the world out there These are people who could be swayed away from Taliban ideology, given an alternative

Presenting that alternative in a place beset by bloodshed is the tricky part With Canada's much vaunted 3-D model for nation-building stuck on the first 'D'—defence—diplomacy and development remain neglected components of the mix. And meanwhile, Taliban resources appear to be on the rise, with more sophisticated explosive devices, and more fighters turning up regularly in Kandahar "External factors," says Hope, "external to the nation, have deliberately pushed hundreds of fighters and millions of dollars into the region" The implication, of course, is involvement by parties in Pakistan, although Hope will not say this directly

But Quetta, on the Pakistani side of the border, is acknowledged as the central command for the Taliban It's a chaotic tribal city where many commanders took refuge after the fall of the Taliban regime at the end of 2001 The insurgency, according to both Western experts and the Taliban themselves, is directed from there Sealing the border could seriously disrupt the Taliban's supply lines, but that is a task Canadians are ill-prepared to take on "We simply don't have the troops," says Hope "We have to train Afghan forces to do that, which is one of our tasks"

In the interim, though, there is a steady flow of arms, cash and fighters to the Taliban, as the insurgents wait for a larger Canadian offensive, striking here and there with suicide attacks, roadside bombs and ambushes intended to goad foreign troops into reacting They take over villages like Pashmul, feeding off the self-sustaining farming community that provides them with food and water From this position of strength, they dare the Canadians to attack

For Lt-Col Hope, the battle is now over He and the men and women under his command are heading home, and a fresh batch of Canadian soldiers from the first battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment based in Petawawa are taking over the reins But Hope has a final warning for the Taliban "Trying to occupy ground and create a battlefield, I think, is a stupid tactic and it's going to cost them a lot," he says "I don't think they appreciate the lethality and determination of the combat power that's going to be arrayed against them"M

ADNAN R KHAN

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Big trouble with the neighbours

Helping Afghanistan is just part of our job. In the fight against the Taliban, it's Pakistan that matters.

BY SEAN M. MALONEY • "So how do you feel about killing Canadians?" I asked the former Taliban commander for the Panjwayi district, a man who was in the process of changing sides

"How would you feel if Afghanistan invaded Canada?" he countered

"We're not invading: we are here at the invitation and in support of the legitimately elected government of Afghanistan. You're a Taliban," I shot back. "The Taliban were a creation of the Pakistani government back in 1996 to control Afghanistan. How do you feel about serving the interests of another country against your own people?"

Mullah Ibrahim, a man suspected of leading the cell that killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry, thought for a moment as a C-130 Hercules roared off from the Kandahar airfield. "You realize the CIA created the Taliban. It's all an American conspiracy."

"No," I corrected him. "The Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence organization created the Taliban. You were probably trained by the ISI who pretended they had the sanction of somebody else." I could tell from the look on his face that I had hit a nerve. Earlier he admitted he had been trained by Pakistani intelligence personnel. We talked about the Soviet period and war fighting methodologies for a while: after all, I'm a military historian and interested in such things. He grew increasingly troubled through the evening. Eventually, Mullah Ibrahim looked at me and said, with some pain in his eyes, "Doctor Sean, on some reflection, you are correct. The ISI is a state within a state and does what it wishes. What it does is no longer good for Afghanistan."

The defection of a Taliban commander and his public declaration thanking "God first, and Canada second for saving my life," is just one of many events here that Canadians might not have expected. In July 2006, they were treated to extensive television footage of their soldiers engaged in combat with the Taliban at the Battle of Pashmul. It's the sort of action Canadians typically see only on the History Channel, with its grainy black-and-white images of their great-grandfathers and grandfathers fighting at Vimy or in Normandy. Though most of the recent news about Canadians in Afghanistan has come when a soldier is killed or wounded in a suicide or improvised explosive device (IED) attack, this time Canada was able to take the fight to the enemy—and beat them at their own game.

The terrain in Zharey district rivals that of the Normandy *bocage* country: sun-hardened mud fortresses surrounded by rows and rows of trenches filled with grapevines, narrow roads, and concealed irrigation systems. It's ideal defensive terrain. Canada's soldiers in their sweat stained, brown mottled camouflage uniforms manouevred through the compounds in 50-degree heat, while the eight-wheel Canadian-built LAV III armoured vehicles poured fire from their 25-mm guns onto enemy positions. At night things shifted from mud brown to night-vision green as we saw Taliban carrying rocket-propelled grenade launchers and assault rifles get mowed down or killed by snipers before they could move in and hurt our people. Canadian artillery thundered to cut off and destroy the escaping enemy. Little was left to chance: troops knew the enemy had depopulated the area so there was little fear of civilian casualties.



IF THE MUSHARRAF REGIME COLLAPSES, THERE ARE FEARS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS GETTING INTO THE WRONG HANDS



A LONG HISTORY. Canadian troops on patrol in Afghanistan in July; (opposite) Taliban fighters from the Soviet days, in October 1996

LEFT AND ABOVE: NCOL ROBERT BOTTRILL/COMBAT CAMERA
RIGHT: ROGER LEMOYNE/LIAISON/GETTY IMAGES

Acts of valour proliferated: medics shielded the wounded, the infantry conducted perilous, close quarter battle, gunners called in air strikes in "danger close" proximity. Transport drivers took vulnerable lumbering supply trucks through enemy-controlled areas. It was a long, hot summer. And the Canadian people were surprised: their supposedly hedonistic Gen Y "Millennial" twentysome-things, led by cynical Gen X "Slacker" thirty-somethings, can fight and fight well.

Yet, at the same time, there are those who question Canada's role in Afghanistan. In effect, there is a clash of views. One is that Canada is a "peacekeeping nation," a "moral superpower," and that UN supremacy should be the dominant expression of Canadian foreign policy. In this world view, Canada should focus on saving Africa from the depredations of 19th-century European colonialism and not get involved in morally suspect regions like southwest Asia and the Arabian Gulf basin, which are an "American" preserve. Afghanistan is "an American war" and we should have our people killed only in the service of the UN, not in American or NATO led operations. This "UN versus United States" view plays well among those with an inferiority complex vis-à vis the Americans, and is a holdover from the 1970s Trudeau era when it was fostered by the government of the day.

But there is another, newer view. Canada does not need to choose between the U.S. and the UN. Canada has interests independent from but overlapping with other Western powers that are global in nature and are threatened by a totalitarian ideology, as they were during the Second World War by Nazi Germany and imperial Japan, and during the Cold War by Soviet Communism. In those conflicts, and in the Balkans during the 1990s, Canada deployed military forces overseas to confront or contain violence that could threaten Canada and her allies. Our society is based on free markets and individual liberty. Radical Islam is the latest variant of a mindset that seeks to destroy the individual and subordinate it to the state or, in this case, it is a twisted variant of Islam used as a tool for control by charismatic leaders who view our political, economic and social system as an obstacle to their designs.

The global al Qaeda movement is at war with Canada. We are mentioned by their prime leader as an enemy; our people were murdered by al Qaeda in the 9/11 attacks. al-Qaeda cells plot the murder of our democratically elected officials; they murder our soldiers in Afghanistan through their proxies. In this war, like the others in the past, there are several fronts. Afghanistan is one of them, but military forces from several coalitions fight the al-Qaeda movement in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Iraq, the Horn of Africa. Canada chose, in 2001, to engage the movement and its proxies in Afghanistan. And this is the root of why we are there today.

Canadians need to understand what we have been doing in Afghanistan and why it matters. From 1996 to 2001, al-Qaeda used its relationship with the Taliban to establish base areas from which their global jihad would operate. They never believed that the West would storm this rugged citadel, and believed that the track record of failure in previous attempts to control Afghanistan would serve as a deterrent. They were wrong. The coalition effort, Operation Enduring Freedom, destroyed the Taliban government shielding al-Qaeda and ripped out the terrorist infrastructure. The Taliban, who were imposed on the Afghan people and were supported by previous Pakistani governments, fled to the south while both al-Qaeda and other Taliban decamped to Pakistan. It was the first major success against the al-Qaeda movement. We must not forget that Canada deployed forces to fight in that phase of the operation.

One does not walk away from a victory—one consolidates it. We walked away from victory after the First World War and the result was Nazi Germany in the 1930s. We stayed in Germany in 1945 to ensure that the totalitarian state was destroyed and the German nation transformed. The same principle holds true for Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda could not be allowed to come back in, nor could various armed groups be allowed to precipitate a civil war, as they had in 1993, which led to the intervention of the Taliban in 1996 in the first place.

The international effort shifted to stabilization operations. Canada deployed with military forces and helped ensure the security of the first legitimate country-wide elections, which brought the Karzai government to power in 2004. Several Canadians were killed as part of the effort to disrupt terrorist cells. By 2005, however, the enemy ramped up a campaign to disrupt the reconstruction effort. Operating from Pakistan and emboldened by al-Qaeda successes in Iraq, enemy forces made more and more forays into the southern provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Zabol and Oruzgan. The south became an area of prime concern to the Afghan government. The requirement for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Kabul waned, and in a reassessment of strategy, Canada chose to commit to the coalition effort in the critical Kandahar province in the south. Working alongside American forces, Canada deployed special operations forces and a provincial reconstruction team, or PRT. In essence, special operations forces hunt the enemy, while the PRT helps the provincial government learn to govern and coordinates assistance programs.

Together, "hunting" operations and "building" operations counter the Taliban's attempts to coerce the Afghan people in the province to join their cause. You can't have one without the other. In time, Canada committed to lead a multinational brigade in Kandahar and to send an infantry battalion in 2006, in part because the Afghan government has been slow to build up its army and police.

Yusuf Zoi is a respected member of the Afghan security forces. I've known him for several years, and he knows well the main problems in Kandahar. "The army is still being built, and our police are corrupt: this happens when they haven't been paid in months."



he says "Without police there is no security The enemy exploits this. At the same time, they come across the border from Pakistan Weapons flow across, including the rockets fired at your camp. There is now a rumour going around amongst the people that the Americans created the Taliban! Why? They reason that because America is a powerful country, it can remove the Taliban regime in Afghanistan but cannot remove them from Quetta [the Pakistani city where the Taliban leadership is based] They must therefore control them! It is insane!"

To succeed, any insurgency needs several things The enemy needs a fighting force and needs the ability to transition from acts of urban terrorism to engaging our forces with guerrilla operations and holding "liberated" areas. It needs a means of paying for the insurgency, and it needs a safe area to operate from It also needs a parallel government to challenge the existing government at the local level. A global information campaign is necessary to convince others of the legitimacy of the cause. Finally, the insurgency needs the support of the people *in* the target area.

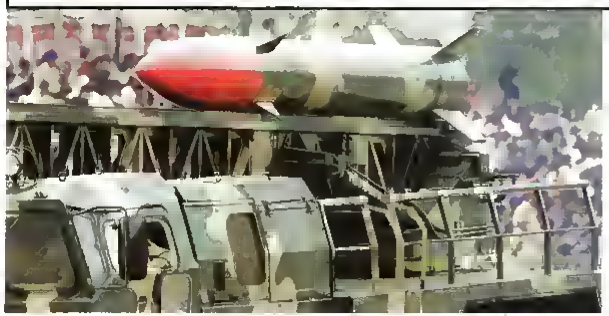
The insurgency in southern Afghanistan has some but not all of these elements The Taliban has a fighting force, funds from al-Qaeda and sympathizers It has a global information campaign on the Internet It is working on parallel government structures It has base areas inside Pakistan. But the insurgency lacks one critical element: broad support from the Afghan people Canadian efforts in Afghanistan are designed specifically to deny this, particularly through the reconstruction teams Coalition military efforts disrupt Taliban military and political activity and as a result the enemy resorts to suicide and IED attacks that kill more civilians than Canadian troops Bombings that hurt the Afghan people do nothing to win them over to the Taliban side.

The problem is that the enemy can generate carnage in southern Afghanistan to convince the Canadian people to pressure our government to pull out· this is where Canadian media need to beware of being used as Taliban propaganda outlets Canada and the coalition can hold the line in the south, but cannot get at the Taliban support network in Pakistan That support network has a steady supply of weapons, jihadists, and suicide bombers ready to go in and kill our people to get us to quit A senior British officer I know was disciplined for daring to identify this problem publicly, yet all of us who study insurgency know that outside support networks will have to be destroyed if we are to achieve peace in southern Afghanistan

Long before 9/11 and prior to the Musharraf coup in 1999, Pakistan was an insurgent incubator The government, through the ISI, supported numerous anti-Indian groups in Kashmir for decades, while Arab nations funded Pakistani groups to "cleanse" the country of Iranian backed Shias after 1979 Pakistan, with Western and Arab support, backed over 20 anti-Soviet groups in the 1980s Al-Qaeda's predecessor organization, the Afghan Services Bureau, had offices in Peshawar. At the same time, Pakistan has to contend with tribal and ethnic based insurgencies in Balochistan, the North-West Frontier, and Waziristan, provinces which border Afghanistan and are heavily infiltrated by al-Qaeda sympathizers The Musharraf government does not exert control over these areas, and the situation is compounded by the fact that elements within Pakistan's security apparatus continue to actively support a variety of insurgent groups As Afghan analyst Musa Khan Jalalzai has written, "By supporting the jihadist cause, Pakistan has weakened its own stability Many of the Islamists want a new regime in Islamabad."

This is a dangerous state of affairs, made even more frightening by the fact that Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal of between 55 and 90 weapons, not to mention that A.Q. Khan, the "Pakistani Oppenheimer," was engaged in supplying nuclear weapons technologies to rogue regimes—and had connections to the Taliban and other radical Islamists. As a 2003 U.S. government study noted, "Concerns about onward proliferation and fears that Pakistan could become destabilized by the U.S.-led anti-terrorism war efforts in Afghanistan have heightened U.S. attention to [weapons of mass destruction] proliferation in South Asia." Canada is not immune and has an interest in ensuring that the Musharraf government doesn't collapse, and the nuclear weapons don't get into the wrong (radical Islamist) hands. an American intelligence officer told me that al-Qaeda was "a gunshot away" from this possibility. Osama bin Laden himself has said that these weapons will be used against Western targets

THE COALITION CAN'T GET AT THE TALIBAN NETWORK IN PAKISTAN



A PAKISTANI ballistic missile on display during National Day celebrations in March 2005

Another American 2005 study notes, "policy analysts consider the apparent arms race between India and Pakistan as posing perhaps the most likely prospect for the future use of nuclear weapons by states." The prospect of pre-emptive Indian action in the event of a loss of control over Pakistani nuclear weapons remains very real It is not in Canada's best interests to play the ostrich in South Asia and pretend that Africa is somehow a more vital region in which to deploy our limited diplomatic, aid, and military resources

On a less apocalyptic note, continuing operations in Kandahar may be the price we all—Britain, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, and the United States—have to pay for continued Pakistani co-operation in countering plots like the recent plan by British Pakistanis to destroy civilian airliners over the Atlantic Ocean Musa Khan Jalalzai notes that "without Pakistan's assistance, the U.S. will not be able to make much headway in nabbing the wanted al Qaeda suspects." American analyst C. Christine Fair elaborates "Questions remain about the nature and depth of support that al-Qaeda enjoys among the Pakistani army and ISI Reports of arrests of army officers linked to al-Qaeda are both comforting... but also disturbing in that such assistance is occurring at all."

Until we figure out a strategy for assisting Pakistan in containing radical Islamic groups, and gaining control of the border areas, Canada and her allies will continue to hold the line in southern Afghanistan M

Sean Maloney teaches Contemporary Warfare at Royal Military College and is the author of Enduring the Freedom: A Rogue Historian in Afghanistan.

MIAN KURSHEED/REUTERS

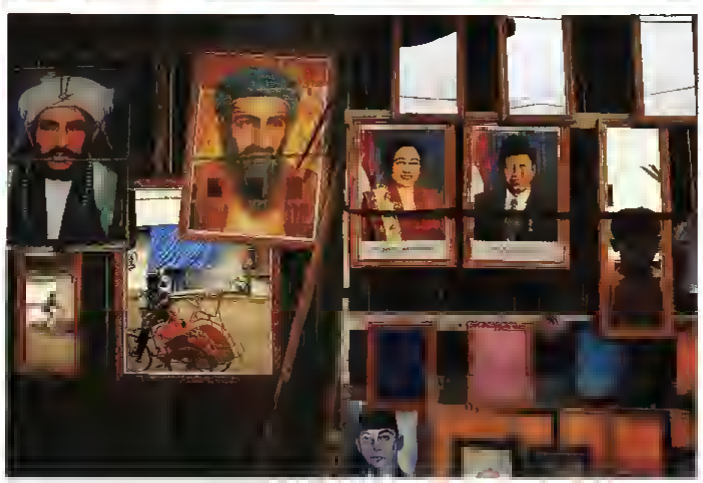














MAN ON THE RUN Images of bin Laden are visible throughout the world, including Indonesia, where these photographs of T-shirts, window tints and painted taxi, were taken from 2002-2006 'The mere fact he has evaded capture is seen by many of his constituents as evidence of divine protection'

CAPTURING OSAMA

Osama bin Laden has not been found, but his image shows up everywhere

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN STANMEYER

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • In the days after Sept. 11, U.S. President George W. Bush uttered a phrase he would later regret. "Wanted: dead or alive." Bush was referring to Osama bin Laden, the al Qaeda ringleader who has been front and centre in the public mind since 2001.

Almost five years have passed, and bin Laden, the world's most wanted man, is still very much at large. Since 2001, the United States has offered a US$25-million reward for his capture, but to no avail. Bin Laden continues to appear in videos and on audiotapes (six in the past year), taunting the United States and its Western allies. He may have been isolated by the manhunt, but he is not out of touch with his followers and enemies.

Documents released in the U.S. since Sept. 11 show that U.S. intelligence agents had several opportunities to catch or kill bin Laden in the mid- to late-1990s, but were stymied by a lack of political will at that time. They came close again in December 2001, nearly trapping him in eastern Afghanistan at a place called Tora Bora, but he slipped away. Since then, the trail has gone cold. Last year, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency closed the unit, called Alec Station, charged with hunting down bin Laden. The CIA says it is still looking, but if the global intelligence community is any closer to catching him, no one is talking. The White House has stated only that bin Laden is "on the run."

Where he may be running to, or from, is a subject of debate. Popular opinion holds that he is somewhere in the Hindu Kush mountain range between Pakistan and Afghanistan. He has been operating in the area for over two decades, says Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert at Georgetown University. "There's a natural xenophobia amongst people in these areas and they protect him." Refuting rumours that he may be in Pakistan, that country's prime minister, Shaukat Aziz, said recently, "Nobody has any idea where this gentleman is, because if they did they would use all their resources to go after [him]."

Bin Laden is an iconic figure. "The mere fact that he has survived and evaded capture is seen by many of his constituents as evidence of divine protection," says Brian Jenkins, a terrorism expert with the Rand Corp. Even while in hiding, bin Laden is so prominent his face can be spotted around the Islamic world, on everything from T-shirts to trucks. Photographer John Stanmeyer, who has captured such images in his travels in Indonesia, poses the question in this photo essay for *Maclean's*, "Where is Osama bin Laden?" The answer, he finds, is everywhere. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN STANMEYER/VII



WE HAVE TO DEFEAT FEAR

In a frightened society, rights are too easily abused, writes

ALEXANDRE TRUDEAU

My documentary, *Secure Freedom*, tells the story of Hassan Almrei, the Syrian national who has been detained in Canada without a proper trial since October 2001. Hassan has not been found guilty of any crime. On the basis of secret evidence and without appeal, a federal court judge has found it *reasonable* for the Canadian government to *believe* that Hassan *might* be a danger to Canadian security. And this reasonable belief that he might be a danger is enough to issue a security certificate against the non-citizen Hassan, to strip him of his freedom, to have held him in solitary confinement for over four years, to continue to detain him for an as-of-yet undefined time, and to possibly deport him to Syria, from where he is a refugee, and where he would be at serious risk of torture.

From the moment I learned about this measure, before I even met Hassan Almrei or any of the four other men also targeted by security certificates, I was disturbed. In my view, only a nation in the grips of fear would behave in such a way toward a person who has not been found guilty of any crime. I was worried by the idea that Canada might be succumbing to policies of fear, the same policies of fear that have transformed the United States. I am terrified of fear. For me, the arrival of fear in the affairs of state always marks a turn towards a more barbaric order.

When Franklin Roosevelt said that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," he was addressing his nation in the darkest years of the Great Depression. He was attempting to steady the faith of American citizens in the American economy right after yet another banking crisis. The fear that he described was thus an economic fear, and emphasized the fact that the free-market economy only functions properly when there is trust in the rules of society and confidence in the monetary system.

Over the years, Roosevelt's words have come to resonate far more broadly, however. They have come to represent the fortitude and unwavering dedication to principles of a great nation that stays the course in the face of odds and obstacles. Indeed, Roosevelt's monument in Washington solemnly highlights what one understands to be the four most American types of freedoms: Freedom of speech. Freedom of worship. Freedom from want. Freedom from fear.

Freedom from fear is a most abstract principle. But when thought about carefully, it may well be the first freedom of society. It harks back to Hobbes's early logic for the emergence of society: the free man is the one freed from animal suspicion and selfishness by his faith in the protecting force of the law. This freedom also connects back to Roosevelt's warning that fear itself poses a crucial threat to the most basic social union. Really, a society wrought with fear is a society teetering on the edge of anarchy. In contrast, the law is fearless, justice is cold, and a secure freedom is a freedom without fear.

Terrorism is a crime explicitly connected to fear. A terrorist terrorizes us. Granted, the term "terrorist" has been sorely misused over the years, but in essence it usually means someone who uses violence or the threat of violence against civilians to try to influence political realities when other means of change are available. For other means of political change to be available, a certain social order is presupposed, a certain set of rules is deemed to be in place. But the terrorist is the individual who reintroduces fear into the social order. Thus terrorism is deemed such a major offence, because it not only causes loss of life and property, but it also challenges and shakes the social order. Terrorism undermines our freedom by inducing fear in us.

It doesn't take much of a jump to then conclude that the only legitimate war on terror must also be a war on fear itself. Terror is defeated when the fear it has induced is dispelled. Dispelling fear is much more than merely neutralizing a threat. To dispel fear, the threat also has to be rendered irrelevant by precisely a moral fortitude unshaken by terror, by an unwavering dedication to higher principles.

The war on terror as it has been conducted for the last five years has done nothing but increase fear worldwide, and thus enhance the impact of terror. Indeed, increased fear has been sown in so many different ways by those who purport to fight terror. To begin with, the very vocabulary of this new war on terror has been nothing but inflammatory and vague from the start. Terms like "axis of evil," "evildoers" or "crusade" conjure up the most dramatic imagery. How deeply they contrast with the sober words of Roosevelt. The appropriate conduct of a leader in the face of adversity should be to exert a calming and reassuring influence on the people, not to rile them up with apocalyptic warnings [illegible] more concrete ways abroad. I can only think of an Iraqi mother trying to explain to her child why bombs are falling on them. In Iraq, since the onset of violence, originally justified by the most fearful of principles—the pre-emptive strike—the social order has decayed to the point where now only violence and fear hold sway. Afghanistan inches closer to such a reality every day.

Fear is also the reason that we are paying so much more dearly for oil these days. The very same fear that Roosevelt said threatened the American banking system has now driven up the value of the ever more precious commodity.

In Canada, fear now colours our leisure choices and our news reporting. Think only of how, not a month ago, this very magazine conjured up intimations of World War III as Israel attacked Lebanon. Or how frantically we reacted to the terror arrests in June. For all we know, the men arrested are innocent, and it was all a mistake. Actually, they are innocent—until proven guilty.

In this over mediated, overstimulated era, fear will likely make frequent appearances amidst our social mood swings. Fear has always been present and will always be present. We should worry, however, when fear begins to infect our justice system or the workings of government. That is the fear that we should fear.

The security certificate has indeed institutionalized fear. It is a pre-emptive strike against an individual on the basis of the vaguest allegations. Hassan Almrei and the others are suspicious by association. They are suspicious for their beliefs, not their actions. I have spent the past year getting to know Hassan Almrei. Though he has been stripped down to nothing by our fears, he should not be feared. He is nothing now. He has nothing, or no one. He has no future. After five years in jail, all that he has left is what he should be granted: his incessant plea for justice.

Defeat fear. Grant it to him. M

Alexandre Trudeau's documentary, Secure Freedom, *will air at 7 p.m. ET, Sept. 10, on CTV*





'THE ONLY THING we have to fear is fear itself,' Roosevelt (opposite) famously said, (above) Trudeau at a rally for Almrei, pictured below

CHARLA JONES/TORONTO STAR; ©ETTMANN/CORBIS

THE ISSUE IN...

FRANCE: BRITISH TOURISTS ARE HOLY TERRORS

After a hard day of praying before the famous shrine at Lourdes, many British tourists like to do what they are notorious for: get drunk and party. The situation has become so bad in the pious town known for its religious shrine that riot police regularly patrol the bars and clubs. Many British tourists are baffled by the police presence. "It's worrying to see these elite police," says Susan Clare, 19. "We come here to party after being reverential all day."

BLACK AT THE BEACH

Conrad Black's property lists for $35.5 million. A house just down the road went for $70 million. Welcome to Palm Beach.

BY PETER C. NEWMAN



HOME SWEET HOME Becoming one of the Right People depended on where you lived

STEVE DENNETT/SPLASH NEWS

From the cobbled driveway, all I can see of Conrad Black's pad, in the ritziest precinct of Palm Beach, Fla., is an unusually high fence. It consists of densely spaced black iron bars, 20 feet high, armed with gold-plated spikes, strong and deadly enough to stop a charging elephant. That and the stone eagles perched on the gate's sturdy ramparts guard the mysterious mansion that, as his main source of bail, is the security deposit that has allowed Conrad Black to enjoy his pre-trial freedom. Reportedly listed for $35.5 million (all figures US$ except where noted), the storybook castle has become the object of more litigation than envy, more speculation than reality. Linda Gary, the Palm Beach realtor who holds the listing, described the property as "spectacular. It truly is an eloquent home—one of the three most luxurious in Palm Beach." That is saying a great deal: a nearby vacant lot half the size is listed at $18 million, a house just down the road sold for $70 million, teardowns fetch somewhere in between.

The value of the mansion was never in dispute. The problem is how much of it Black still owns, because according to attorneys in the U.S. Justice Department, his equity position had been seriously eroded (down to $8 million at one point, according to some reports), not nearly enough to cover his $20-million bail. The prosecutors charged that, back in June, Black defaulted on a $10-million mortgage he had taken out on the house from Laminar Direct Capital—an allegation Black denies. (He also denies any need or desire to sell the house now, though the listing remains.) Revenue Canada also held a C$14-million lien against the property. To add to the confused bookkeeping, prosecutors claimed Black's wife, Barbara Amiel, had an undisclosed interest in the property.

The bail dispute has since been more or less settled, the government lien has been paid off, while Black agreed to raise his bail guarantee by $1 million in cash. To those of us who have followed the Perils of Conrad and Babs over the past few years, the bail issue has always been a puzzlement. The $21-million Black was forced to cough up has no equal in the annals of American corporate prosecutions. Kenneth Lay, for example, who drove Enron into the ground with his unethical dealings, was dunned only $500,000, while the bail for Bernie Ebbers, the ex-CEO of WorldCom Inc., who was responsible for the largest, self-inflicted bankruptcy in American business history, was set at $10 million. Black has been accused of many crimes and misdemeanours, but there's no reason to suspect he intends to skip town. He genuinely believes he is innocent and can't wait to prove it, so that he can rehabilitate himself among the Palm Beach honchos he regards as his peers.

His ownership of the *Telegraph* and connections to Maggie Thatcher assured his social standing in England, and before his current troubles, he was the grand fromage among Toronto's elite. But in New York, where he longed for the kind of clout that would get Barbara and him on "A" invitation lists, they didn't count. He even tried, unsuccessfully, to buy a Gotham newspaper to increase their influence. In 1997, they decided that Palm Beach was where they could exercise the maximum impact. Becoming one of the Right People in that stratospheric Establishment environment depended on where and how you lived. Thus they chose their home carefully, and settled on 1930's S. Ocean Blvd.

Having visited Black in Palm Beach during his glory days, I decided to return, and did so earlier this month. The American Establishment's tranquility base, the gilt-edged community sits on top of a barrier reef, some 22 km long and less than a kilometre across, at its widest. It is linked to the mainland by three drawbridges that have been raised to apprehend burglars.

Canada has no equivalent to Palm Beach. New Brunswick's St. Andrews by the-Sea and Chester, N.S., come the closest, but their scale and good taste remove them from contention. Palm Beach was and remains the bastion of Old Yankee Money. Names like DuPont, Kennedy, Phipps, Dodge, Cluett, Guest, Woolworth, Hutton and Vanderbilt no longer dominate. But their progeny and prototypes remain. Their skin belongs to the afternoon sun. They hold common assumptions, communicate through raised eyebrows and seldom experience any conflicts of interest, since their interests so seldom conflict.

Unlike their lesser cousins in lesser venues, the Palm Beach rich infrequently hunt for salvation in the fine print of IRS tax manuals. Although most of them earned their original fortunes through some form of insider trading, which was probably invented among the sand dunes here, they regarded themselves as walking proof to an invidiously competitive society that ability and application can be spectacularly rewarded. The capricious castles in which they live are monuments to their self-indulgence. The fortunes of Palm Beach's fortunate inhabitants are too massive, too cleverly diversified, and much too carefully husbanded to be affected by mere swings in the business cycle. About the worst that happens during recessions is that, for a year or two, they live on the interest generated by their fortunes, instead of the interest on the interest, as they usually do.

Palm Beach is one of the last places on earth where there still exists a social season—from Thanksgiving to Easter. Invitation lists to the winter cycle of house parties and fancy dress balls mercilessly delineate individual status. Social climbing remains the favourite indoor sport. The point was made most dramatically by Arthur Somers Roche, an American millionaire who spent most of his life in Palm Beach, when he appeared at an Everglades Club costume ball dressed as a social climber. He had a miniature ladder tied to his back, its four rungs labelled, in ascending order, "Common People," "People," "Nice People" and "Right People."

THE MANSION IS UNDERWRITING BLACK'S BAIL AS HE AWAITS TRIAL



SHAUN BEST/REUTERS

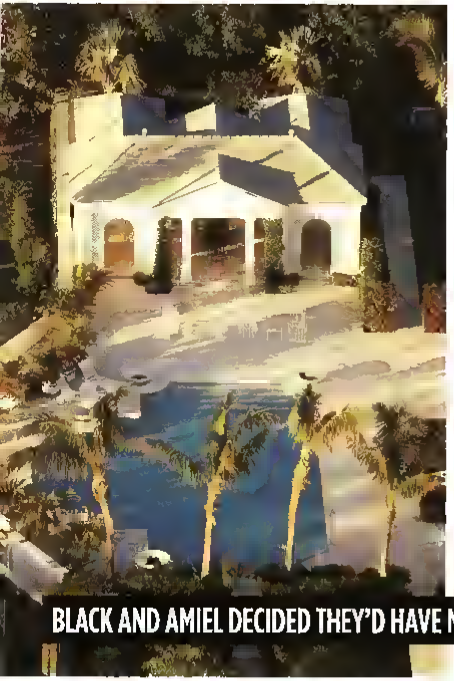
Palm Beach may well be the most assiduously zoned community on earth. Local bylaws forbid hot dog stands, laundromats, billboards, billiard halls, neon signs, aluminum siding, hippies, and public demonstrations, as well as funeral parlours and hospitals—the dead and dying are discreetly carted across the causeways to West Palm.

The locals treat themselves as privileged citizens who inhabit an earthly paradise of conspicuous consumption. A mansion owned by the Stotesbury family actually had a 40-car garage; there are private petting zoos for the kids, and art collections that no museum could afford for the adults. Court tennis, an adaptation of the *jeu de paume* originated by the kings of France, with its sagging net and loose racquets, is still played, as are polo (champagne is sold at the concession stands) and croquet ("You don't need much physical strength to play croquet, you just have to be a killer," one aficionado once said). The place swarms with eccentrics. One of the Palm Beach DuPonts imported tame iguanas from Cuba and trained them to stand at attention, as a kind of honour guard, whenever he called them on a special whistle. The prevailing proprietary ethic of the place was best summed up by the wife of multi-millionaire Stephen "Laddie" Sanford: "I have been blessed with one of the most beautiful homes in the world," she said, gazing out through her leaded windows at the Atlantic Ocean, "and I can't help feeling it's mine."

Palm Beach has become considerably more egalitarian since its pre-war heyday. Its wealth is most visible during the daily parade of the wives and daughters of its regulars along Worth Avenue, a cornucopia of glam-shops, more glitzy than whimsical. Tiffany & Co., Hermès, Giorgio Armani, Neiman Marcus, Gucci, Cartier: they're all here. White shoes for men who attend tea dances are still available, while Grande Armee stocks armies of toy soldiers belonging to a dozen nationalities. The Austrian Clockshop's timepieces track the path of the sun, the moon and most of the planets, as well as earthly hours and minutes—including Newfoundland's rogue time zone. The women who patronize these specialty boutiques appear to be finalists of a Meryl Streep look-alike contest—and behave like the killer shark she so brilliantly portrayed in her recent movie, *The Devil Wears Prada*.

The current crop of Palm Beach inhabitants includes a riptide of nouveau riches, including Revlon CEO and Wall Street uber-raider Ron Perelman, who in 2004 sold his six-acre ocean-front estate for $70 million. Palm Beach is home to such off-the-wall characters as professional wharf rat Jimmy Buffett, broadcaster Rush Limbaugh, fashion designer Arnold Scaasi, super-rock-star Rod Stewart, and Donald Trump, the guy with the world's most obvious comb-over, so much so that his hairdo resembles a bird's nest. (Trump trumped his rivals by purchasing Mar-a-Lago, the island's grandest estate, once owned by Marjorie Merriweather Post. He has turned it into a private residential club that boasts 58 bedrooms and 22-karat gold-leaf ceilings.)

Canadians who call Palm Beach their winter home include Paul Desmarais, Gerry Schwartz and Heather Reisman, the Asper family, Brian Mulroney, and Jonathon Deitcher, who was the former prime minister's financial adviser, as well as a sprinkling of Bronfmans. But no Canadians caused a greater stir than Conrad Black



BLACK AND AMIEL DECIDED THEY'D HAVE MAXIMUM IMPACT HERE

THEY PAID $9.9 million for the property and then proceeded to rebuild it—unusual even by Palm Beach's standards

and his glamorous wife, Barbara Amiel

Black had first visited this chi-chi world in 1969, on his way back from Cuba, where he had gone to watch the celebration of Fidel Castro's 10th anniversary in power. He hated that Communist whoop-up, and gladly accepted an invitation to decompress at the Palm Beach mansion of Bud McDougald, his mentor and the Godfather of Argus Corp., which became Black's eventual takeover target and original grubstake. In the winter of 1978, Black rented the Palm Beach house of Neil McKinnon, former president of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and shortly afterwards purchased a relatively modest Federalist mansion at 150 Canterbury Lane.

"I've never been back to Cuba, but I have often returned here, although Palm Beach isn't everyone's cup of tea," he told me when I visited his digs while writing a book about him. Then he foreshadowed his future wife Barbara Amiel's legendary quip that her extravagance knew no bounds, when he told me: "Some people are offended by the extreme opulence of Palm Beach. But I find it sort of entertaining. A couple of seasons ago I was standing at the corner of Worth Avenue and South County Road when I heard a slight rumpus. I turned around and saw that a Silver Cloud II had been struck in the fender by a Phantom V, which had come to such an abrupt stop that a Silver Shadow had bumped into it. So you had three Rollses stuck together. It was hilarious."

At the time, most of the private clubs on the island still pursued a vicious brand of anti-Semitism that included not only members but their guests. (Bud McDougald snuck me in for uncomfortable lunches at the Everglades Club.) Decades earlier, in *The Last Resorts*, Cleveland Amory told the story of a Jewish gentleman trying to register at the Breakers, Palm Beach's Establishment hotel. Upon being informed that while not actually restricted, the hotel catered primarily to a Christian clientele, he exclaimed, "Well, I'll be a son of a bitch!" To which the desk clerk is supposed to have replied, "If you can prove that, I can get you in anywhere."

By the time Conrad and Barbara decided on Palm Beach for their next residence, they already owned luxurious manor houses in London, Toronto and New York. But their purchase of 1930 S. Ocean Blvd., formerly owned by Siegfried Otto of Germany, was the most extravagant of all. They paid $9.9 million for the property, then proceeded to rebuild it, which was unusual even by Palm Beach's overindulgent standards.

Ocean Boulevard, the sliver of prestigious land on which the Black residence squats, is just wide enough to contain their mansion and a two-lane road. What makes the house unique is that, along with the dozen palaces situated along the boulevard, it enjoys twin seascapes: the heaving Atlantic Ocean at sunrise and the smooth expanse of Lake Worth (hooked into the Intracoastal Waterway) at sunset. But living in such an exclusive enclave presents a problem: after all, one doesn't want to be seen crossing the highway ("*Much too public, darling...*"). At the residence purchased by the Blacks, this dilemma was solved by having a tiled tunnel under Ocean Boulevard, which opened up to 300 feet of private oceanfront.

To their already palatial quarters, the Blacks added a private movie theatre, a two-storey guest house, new servants' quarters, a swimming pool cabana with its own kitchen—in fact, so many new features that their listing is described by real estate agent Linda Gary as "a gorgeous, British Colonial style estate, completely rebuilt in 2000 for its present owners." The 21,000-sq.-foot Black residence is a collage of balconies and loggias—Italian arcades that open to the air on one side. The dwelling includes a magnificent wood-panelled library, plus a very special spiral staircase that leads to the Martello tower, which commands a utopian view of most of the island. The double stairwell is carved out of black onyx, a semi-precious stone whose use dates back to Roman times when it was fashioned into vases and cups. The interior decor features the gold-fringed American flag that once hung behind Franklin Roosevelt's White House desk. The mini-palace, which has five bedrooms (decorated with vintage furniture) and eight bathrooms, is set into a lush Versailles-style landscape that includes tennis courts and a heated pool. The renovations were so costly that by 2002, the house the Blacks had purchased for less than $10 million five years earlier was appraised by Palm Beach County officials as being worth $17 million. Currently it is for sale at $35.5 million. When they placed their stately chateau on the market nearly two years ago, the Blacks must have figured that all their other renovations had more than doubled the value of their original investment. That price may well be attainable, once the property's legal shackles have been removed. Meanwhile, the fate of his extravagant *pied a terre* on America's Gold Coast will continue to be a pivotal factor at Conrad Black's criminal trial, due to begin next March. M

EMPLOYEE OF THE WEEK

GLUTTONOUS AUDITOR GETS JUST DESSERT

"Iron Face Auditor" Li Jinhua, the stern head of China's National Audit Office (NAO), is celebrated for his war on graft. But imagine the loss of face when it was learned that not only did one of his auditors receive free meals from an electricity bureau, but during one he ate and drank himself to death. Zhang Hongtao, 25, vomited and dropped dead. The NAO has since warned that auditors who "violate discipline will be punished." Too late.

STEVE DENNETT/SPLASH NEWS

FOREST GRUMPY

Greenpeace finds locals on the other side in the fight over the rainforest

BY ISABEL VINCENT • If Greenpeace activists were hoping to win local support for their campaign against the deforestation of the Amazon, they picked the wrong place when they arrived in Santarém, a sleepy inland port city at the confluence of the Amazon and Tapajós rivers in northern Brazil. In fact, since the group's ill-fated foray into the region this spring, the most popular bumper sticker in Santarem reads, "Greenpeace Out. The Amazon is Brazilian."

The stickers were issued by a group of soybean farmers and residents to protest what some described as Greenpeace's "terrorist activities." In May, a group of some 40 farmers and their supporters stormed a Greenpeace ship that had arrived in Santarém to protest Cargill, the U.S. multinational. Cargill had built port facilities there to ship local soybeans to Europe, where they're used as animal feed by fast-food chains. The farmers became incensed after eight Greenpeace activists draped a large flag on a ship with the message "Cargill Out"—part of a wave of international anti-Cargill protests. "We managed to stop Cargill's soy operations for 3½ hours, which was our objective," said Andre Muggiati, a Greenpeace spokesman in Brazil, referring to the Santarém protest. "Our objective was to interrupt the world soy business that is causing deforestation in Santarém."

In Santarém, where locals are generally laid back and friendly, few people had any sympathy for the message. But the conflict highlights the complexities of environmental preservation in the Amazon rainforest, which covers 60 per cent of the country and is one of its poorest regions. In municipalities outside Santarém, most inhabitants eke out a living tapping rubber trees, fishing or weaving. Many say they don't want outsiders meddling in their affairs. And they're hoping that a proposed new road will bring jobs and development to Santarém (Cargill and its supporters are lobbying the federal government to finish paving a 1,765-km highway through the forest to connect the port with Mato Grosso, the region with the largest production of soybeans). "There's much more support here for Cargill than for Greenpeace," said Wilson Marx, a tour operator. "Santarém is a city of 300,000 without a major industry. With the port and the road here it will mean it is much cheaper to transport soybeans to Europe, and that will encourage more farmers to plant soy. People want to earn a living."

It's also the argument used by Cargill, the largest private company in the U.S. But environmentalists say paving the road would open the rainforest up to loggers, ranchers and more soybean farmers, and mean further deforestation. More than 20 per cent of the Amazon region has been destroyed as a result of logging, ranching and farming, they say, with 1.8 million hectares lost in 2003 and 2004. Much of that has gone to plant a type of soy developed by Brazilian scientists that grows quickly in poor soil and under blistering sun. "Nobody wants to destroy the forest," says Antonio Dias, a 60-year old rubber tapper near Santarém who can no longer make a living and hopes his son can get work planting soy. "We just want to be able to make a living." M

GREENPEACE demonstration in Frankfurt, loading up soybeans at Santarém (below)





COLIN MCPHERSON/CORBIS (TOP); FRANK MAY/DPA; ANDRE PENNER/AP

MAN VS. NATURE

RAMPAGING RACCOONS TERRORIZE TOWN

"It's a new breed," said an alarmed resident at a recent neighbourhood meeting in Olympia, Wash. "They're urban raccoons and they're not afraid." The "urban" coons have so far slain 10 cats, attacked a dog and bitten a human. It's so bad that the woman bitten now carries an iron bar. Even a seasoned state wildlife control expert is amazed at the pack's preoccupation with violence. Says Sean Carrell: "They're in command up there."

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MACLEAN'S

ROGERS
Your World Right Now





Some parents think making kids pay their own way teaches self-reliance. Others are horrified by that notion: why would any parent not pay if they had the money?

BY KATE FILLION

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIE CAMPBELL

WHO SHOULD PAY FOR UNIVERSITY?





Like many university students, Justin Tetreault works full-time in the summer and part-time during the academic year to make ends meet. Unlike most, however, he's been doing so since Grade 6, when he started his first paper route, saving the money so he could pay his own way through university. Now in his fourth year at Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Tetreault, who is majoring in law, justice and political science, has paid all his own educational expenses, including tuition and books, without help from his parents and without student loans. "I always knew I wanted to be a lawyer," says Tetreault, 21, who will graduate debt-free and hopes to proceed immediately to law school. "My parents encouraged me, they really wanted me to go to university, but they think it's better for me to pay for it myself."

The Tetreaults aren't rich, but they are middle-class. Justin's mother works at a call centre, his father at a car dealership. However, though they allow their son to live at home rent-free while he attends Algoma, "our philosophy is that he should pay for university himself because he will get more satisfaction from it and value it more if he does," explains Suzanne Tetreault. "It's a good lesson for kids to work hard for what they want. I don't think children should be given a free ride."

It's hard to argue with the results. While working 16 hours a week at a gas station, Justin maintains an average of 86 per cent, holds two scholarships based on academic performance, served as vice-president of the student council last year, remains active in campus politics—and finds time to do walkathons for the homeless. "If my parents offered me money I'd certainly take it," he says, "but I'm proud that I've paid my own way. It's been a valuable lesson for me to have to work for so long and to assume ownership for my education."

Universities are busier than ever before: in 2005, there were more than 806,000 full-time students in Canada, an increase of almost 150,000 over the previous four years, as well as 273,000 part-timers. And the majority of Canadian families do contribute toward their children's post-secondary education, whether in the form of outright grants or long-term loans. In 2006, 56 per cent of Canadian undergraduates received financial help from their families—on average, $6,400—according to the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium's study of more than 10,000 students graduating from 25 Canadian universities. In fact, family contributions are "the single most common source of educational funding," though three-quarters of all students rely on a combination of funding sources, including government student loans, scholarships, their own savings, and bank loans.

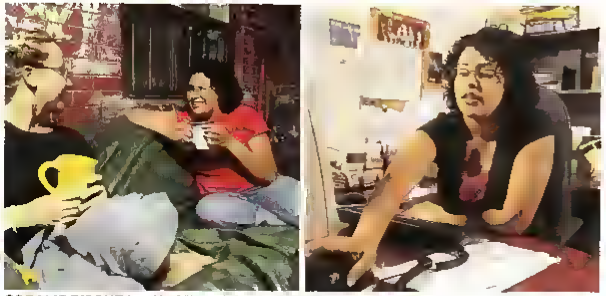
One of the most compelling reasons for parents to help out is simply that it increases the likelihood their kids will go to college or university. Students who don't receive financial support from their parents may delay attendance in order to earn money; research shows that every month spent out of school decreases the chances of ever enrolling.

Nevertheless, as tuition and residence bills come due, some parents believe the best thing they can do for their children is not pay them, despite the fact that the average cost of a year at a Canadian university, including books, fees, room and board and other living expenses, is close to $13,000. Forcing children to fend for themselves, some parents believe, builds character and increases the likelihood they will succeed at university and in the workplace. "There are a lot of stories about kids who waste mom and dad's money and party all year. And there are too many kids out there who seem to think, way into adulthood, that their parents owe them things," says Caroline MacLean, who works at a radio station in Owen Sound, Ont. The MacLeans loan their 20-year-old daughter Christine some money to attend McMaster, but fully expect to be repaid. "It's not that we don't want to help her, but that children need to learn fiscal responsibility."

Others believe, just as firmly, that parents who can afford to pay, but don't, have a thing or two to learn about responsibility themselves. "What kind of parent would not pay, even if they had to make sacrifices? What kind of person does not want the best for their child?" spluttered one medical aesthetician in Toronto when asked who should foot the bill. "I pay for everything for my sons. They are both studying in the U.S., and they are good boys who bring home A's. And by the way, they will be taking care of me when I am old!"

Many parents view paying for university as an extension of paying for piano lessons or private school: a parental responsibility, rather than an optional frill. "There are certain obligations you take on when you become a parent, and I don't think those obligations stop at the age of 18," says Jerry Dykopf, a partner at Kraftberger LLP, an accounting firm in Toronto. "Certainly, there are better ways to teach your children self-reliance than by not paying for them to go to university." Dykopf, who was born in Poland, knows something about self-reliance, having put himself through university because "I came to Canada with $80 in my pocket and my parents could not afford to help me." His daughters, 21 and 18, have it easier: their

JUSTIN TETREAULT (top) and Christine MacLean are both paying for their university educations. MacLean's parents loan her some money but expect to be repaid



CORALIE D'SOUZA, a U of T student, worked 21 hours a week at two jobs last year

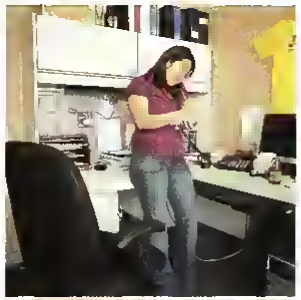
parents are paying for everything remotely school-related, from tuition to books to parking. The Dykopfs view the $80,000 or so they will spend on their children's post secondary education as "an investment in the future."

The future, it turns out, costs about the same as it did a decade ago: the real cost of university tuition has remained remarkably stable, according to a new study by the Educational Policy Institute in Toronto. Every year, Statistics Canada releases tuition figures higher than the previous year's, "but once you adjust for inflation and the massive increase in tax credits for education, which effectively act as an after-the-fact rebate on tuition, it turns out that the real increase in tuition has been less than $600 over the past 10 years," says Alex Usher, author of the report "Beyond the Sticker: A Closer Look at Canadian University Tuition Fees." "In fact, tuition is, in real terms, lower now than it was in the 1999-2000 school year."

This is good news for large families, where parents must weigh the need to save for retirement against educational costs. Colleen and Phil Madonia, who own a printing business in Markham, Ont., wanted all four of their children to get degrees and began saving for it as soon as they could. "They've all done well and I think in part it's *because* we're paying: they respect the fact that our money's on the line and they'd better not waste it," says Colleen, whose eldest son graduated from Queen's three years ago with a degree in engineering. Currently, the Madonias have a daughter at Queen's and a son at Waterloo, "and then some breathing space, when maybe we can save for retirement, because our youngest is 8."

Other parents foot their kids' educational bills because they would rather tighten their own belts than see their children burdened with large debts. "The idea that you have to repay a loan after you finish university and are in the workforce is such a hypothetical, way-in-the-distance idea when you're 18. I remember getting my student loan money and thinking, 'Oh, they'll forget all about this,' and running out and buying boots with it. I accumulated debts just by being young and naive," says one health care researcher. Now that her son is heading to the University of Toronto, she and her husband have decided to pay for everything, so he can graduate debt-free. "The bank is very eager to give him a line of credit, but my fear as a parent is that he'd be like me, and run out and buy a car with the money," she says. "And I say that even though he's very responsible and hard-working and has always had jobs."

She's heard about the kids who party all year. 'Too many out there seem to think, way into adulthood, their parents owe them things.'





YENNA HUA'S mother has told her she won't be contributing financially this year

University administrators agree that even seemingly sensible students may, in fact, be financially illiterate. "A lot of these kids have never written a cheque, they've never had to do a budget, they have no idea what anything costs, and suddenly they may have a whole lot of money in a bank account that's intended to last six or eight months," says Deborah Robinson, associate registrar at the University of British Columbia, where eight financial advisers counsel individual students and conduct workshops on such topics as why financing your education on credit cards is a really, really bad idea. Three-quarters of Canadian students have credit cards, because "so much shopping is done on the Internet now. And some use credit cards to pay tuition and fees in order to get air miles," says Robinson. "But many don't understand compound interest. When we show them a calculation of how much you pay in the end for, say, a computer, when you just pay your minimum card balance every month and the interest continues to mount, they usually gasp. They just don't get it."

Financial literacy, say parents like the Tetreaults and MacLeans, is not a problem for their children, who have, of necessity, mastered the art of saving, budgeting and spending wisely. Early on, Justin Tetreault decided to make small daily sacrifices—brown bagging his lunch, cheap seats at the baseball game—rather than accept a student loan. There were big sacrifices, too: turning down acceptances at the University of Toronto and the University of Windsor because, he reasoned, by attending Algoma he could save thousands of dollars by living at home.

Many students who have made these kinds of trade-offs agree with their parents: it's for their own good. "I am more responsible and have a better sense of budgeting than I would have if I had not been encouraged to manage my own finances," says Coralie D'Souza, 21, who is in her final year at the University of Toronto. Her parents pay her tuition but she is responsible for everything else, and believes it has given her a significant advantage both academically and in the workplace, not least because "I have, in a sense, been forced to learn how to manage my time effectively." To put it mildly. Last year, D'Souza worked 21 hours a week at two different jobs, one at City Hall and one in an X-ray clinic, logged 10 hours a week volunteering at the university's sustainability office, and put in an untold number of hours as an elected student governor.

Few students, however, have her self-discipline. And working more than 10 hours a week, say Usher and Robinson, tends to have a negative impact on marks or makes it impossible to participate fully in campus life. Many students whose parents opt not to help have no other choice, however, particularly if their families' assets are large enough that they don't qualify for student aid. "Government student loans are there for the neediest students," says Robinson. "The philosophy behind them is, if parents value education, it's a sacrifice. It's not that you get to keep a boat and a house and go on vacation. It's that you as parents have a responsibility to pay for education. At UBC, family assets are what we look at first when considering loan applications."

'What kind of parent wouldn't pay, even if they had to make sacrifices? What kind of person doesn't want the best for their child?'



TUITION, BOOKS, PARKING ... all paid: (from left) Aliza, Tarry, Jarry, Rebecca Dykopf

Some parents, however, simply don't consider university age children to be dependents. "My daughter is 20 years old, for goodness sake, and no longer living at home—why should we be considered financially responsible?" wonders Caroline MacLean, who, at 20, was married, working and owned a home. Christine, now in her third year at McMaster, qualifies for a loan of just $132 from the Ontario Student Assistance Plan, so she'll be using her savings from a summer work/study job, working part-time during the school year, and borrowing from her parents to come up with the $15,000 she'll need this year.

Debt is not necessarily bad for kids, says Phil Clavel, author of *I Am Not an ATM: Machine: How Parents Can Regain Control of Their Lives While Still Loving Their Children*, to be published this month. "You develop responsibility, better savings habits, and a sense of seriousness about moving on in the world. Some parents can't think clearly about these issues because they are motivated by guilt. Sometimes, wanting the best for your child means putting the brakes on and saying, 'No, I'm not going to pay for that,' or loaning your children the money rather than giving it to them outright."

"I'd rather borrow from my parents than from the bank, because they won't charge me interest," says Christine MacLean, an A student who believes that working and assuming debt has made her more serious about her studies and given her an edge in the job market. But, she says, "To be honest, it is hard when reading week comes along and everyone else is going to Cuba and shopping in New York, and I have to save my money. I'm not angry at my parents, but there are times when I feel sorry for myself."

Still, many self-supporting students point to the existence of a maturity gap with classmates who blow off courses because they can always retake them, bankrolled by mom and dad. "I feel like an adult, and I don't think I would feel this way if my mother were paying for me," says Ophthalee Tep, 22, the assistant manager of a jewellery store in Toronto and a fourth-year student at York University. "And I work really hard to get the best marks I can. If I didn't, and I were wasting both my time and my own money, it would be really upsetting."

But others take the opposite approach. Since mom and dad aren't paying, they can't say anything about my marks (or my beer consumption, girlfriend or haircut). Angelo Volpe, who put himself through university by working construction during the summers, admits to "doing the least amount of work to get by." Paying his own way was stressful and money worries took a toll on his grades, says Volpe, who graduated three years ago and is now the foreman at a construction company in Toronto. "But it's the main reason I'm successful and a lot of my friends are struggling. They weren't taught to fend for themselves. Their parents gave them everything and it made them lazy."

Although it's impossible to track numbers, common sense indicates that a student who receives no parental help would be much more likely to give up and drop out. Those who persist, however, may be more attractive to employers than their more pampered peers. After interviewing college students for summer internships this year, one employer noted in a *Wall Street Journal* Web forum, "The ones paying much of their own way bowled over the competition in terms of maturity, confidence and seriousness of purpose. These aren't kids, they are impressive young adults."

The prospect of future gains is only marginally comforting to Yenna Hua, whose mother announced in July that she will not be contributing financially this year, Yenna's last at York University. "She wants me to know the value of a dollar, and I do respect that it's her life and her money and she has worked very hard for it," says Hua. "But I have to say, right now I'm freaking out. I like to shop and go to clubs and everything else a girl likes to do, and there's no way I'll be doing any of that this year. I have to save my money." M



FOR STARTERS, 'A is for Attendance' is a myth. Oh, and never say anything like, 'I missed the first class, did you do anything?'

Here's the way to get straight A's

Two professors have written the first-ever good-grades guidebook

BY JULIA MCKINNELL • Like it or not, grades are the currency at college and university. "They're the money. They're what counts," say two professors who are also the co-authors of a new book that claims to be the first ever to reveal the secrets a student needs to know to score straight A's. Lynn Jacobs and Jeremy Hyman, a husband-and-wife team from the University of Arkansas, are the authors of *Professors' Guide to Getting Good Grades in College*. Lynn Jacobs teaches art history. Her husband, Jeremy Hyman, who has taught at MIT and Princeton, currently teaches medieval philosophy.

Discussing grades with students is controversial. A lot of professors don't want to get into it. "It runs the risk of a challenge or confrontation from a hostile or sobbing student," writes Hyman. And giving advice on grades is considered by many professors to be "unbecoming."

Yet Hyman vividly remembers back when he was a student getting an assignment and feeling "stunned" at the lack of instruction given by the teaching assistant. The assignment asked for six to eight pages on either a) Is Homer's *Iliad* a poem of force? or b) Could Odysseus ever return home? "How exactly was I to write nine pages on what looked to me like a one-sentence answer?" asks Hyman, remembering how absurd he thought it was that the teaching assistant refused to provide any guidance. "I thought to myself, 'If I ever get out of this course, if I ever become a professor myself, I will do something about this deplorable state of affairs.' "

Years later, while cleaning out his office, Hyman came across a folder crammed with tips he'd made for students when he became a teaching assistant. "I took a glance at the first one and thought, 'Gee, here's a good tip. And here's another.' " That night, he and his wife Lynn brainstormed about their best ideas for getting good grades. "*The Professors' Guide* had been born," he says.

Professor Peter Taylor at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., laments the fact that today's student is so focused on grades. "In the sixties you wouldn't need a book like this," says Taylor. These days, a simple diploma doesn't cut it. Employers look at grades for the initial cut to decide who to interview, he says. Top marks get the top jobs. Taylor would prefer a system with less value placed on marks. "More in the way of pass/fail courses," he says. "Bright can mean a lot of things. Highly creative students can't always perform in high-pressure situations," such as tests and exams.

Professor Milt McClaren at Simon Fraser University in Richmond, B.C., scoffs at the idea that talking grades to students teeters on questionable etiquette. "I try to make it absolutely clear what my expectations are. And I also try to make it clear how I'm going to evaluate students so that they know what the rules of the game are," he says. McClaren adds that his colleagues often say to him "You know, students don't talk about anything anymore. All they want to do is talk about what's on the test." It's a common complaint among professors, he says, to which he replies: "Do you have a mirror in your bathroom? Well, look in it. We're the enemy. We're the people who are driving this culture."

A grade point average, McClaren says, "is worse than a criminal record. You're never going to get rid of it." Professors should have some sympathy with that situation, he feels. "It's not good enough to tell a kid, 'Just suck it up. I don't want to discuss it with you because it's kind of crass.' "

1 Tape-recording lectures is a huge waste of time

Hyman and Jacobs' book looks at everything from how papers and exams are marked and which courses to take to when and how to drop or pick up a course, how to make the most of lectures, how to study for and write exams, and finally, the dos and don'ts of talking to a prof.

To start things off, they set straight what they believe are misleading myths. For instance, "A is for Attendance" is incorrect, they write. "It's simply not the case that attendance will get you a good grade." Jacobs and Hyman don't discourage attendance, but the focus in grading is on product not process. Furthermore, the grader of a course could be an anonymous grad student, so sucking up to the prof in class is likely a waste of time.

MICHEL EULER/AP

The book also claims that it's a myth that professors don't care how well students do. "The fact is," they write, "professors feel really good about giving out A's and really bad about giving out C's and D's." Taylor, who teaches math and statistics, concurs. "I really hate failing a student. I really hate getting a paper where the student simply hasn't done anything that's worth very much."

McClaren's take is alarmingly different, however. If a prof hands out too many A's, he says, "I can tell you right now you're going to get a memo that's going to say, 'You're giving too many A's.' You're [seen as] too soft. A lot of people have a curve in their head that it's only possible for five per cent of students to get an A. We need to rethink the grading system."

When it comes to essays, graders have basic expectations, write Jacobs and Hyman. If the paper displays knowledge but it's not fancy or embellished, it gets a B. If it omits something that the grader thinks is an essential point, or if it's confusing, vague or irrelevant, it'll probably get a C. An A paper, on the other hand, shows a deep understanding of the material and likely brings in extra data or original insight to support the points made. Beware. A teaching assistant will "put your work under the microscope of their intellect and knowledge. They're primed to find errors," Jacobs and Hyman write.

4 Avoid green or purple felt-tip pens for exams

In chapter three of *Professors' Guide*, the authors discuss the well-known strategy of students "larding up" their schedules with "Mickey Mouse" courses, which Taylor notes was unheard of in his day. "I don't even remember the word 'bird course' being around," he says. Children's literature ("kiddie lit"), for instance, is always a popular way to fulfil an English requirement without ever having to read anything above a Grade 2 level. Surprisingly enough, Jacobs and Hyman don't discourage the practice. However, the authors include the cautionary tale of a classics major who signed up for "Greek and Roman Sports and Recreation" expecting a respite from intellectual rigour, but who found himself so bored he wound up with a C.

"The moral?" write Jacobs and Hyman. "If you take a course because it's easy and slog through it like a zombie, you might end up with a less stellar grade." Beware also of the "birdy" sounding sociology course. If it presupposes a command of statistics, it'll be a "GPA-buster for someone who isn't good with numbers."

2 Running out of time on a multiple-choice exam? Choose 'D' for the rest of the answers.

As for prof "shopping," if students have good evidence that someone is a "hard-ass grader," they need to think carefully before proceeding. Jacobs and Hyman suggest students ask another professor whether they can "expect to do well" in so-and-so's class. They should also look for a posted grade sheet from the previous term or ask friends what their experience in the course was.

A foreign-language requirement is the "*Fear Factor* of the college scene," write Jacobs and Hyman. "Once your grades in a language course start to slide, it's hard to stop the downward spiral." They suggest not picking a language that requires learning a new alphabet. Chinese, for instance—"unless you plan to go into business in Asia (contact Wal-Mart or Proctor and Gamble for more details)," they write.

If students find a course totally incomprehensible, or if they like the course but don't like the professor, "it's an absolute no-brainer." Drop it, advise the authors. And if, after dropping a course, a student enters a new course late, he should introduce himself to the professor, they advise. That way, he'll look like a diligent student. Politely request a course syllabus is their advice. And never say anything like "I missed the first class, did you do anything?"

On the subject of taking lecture notes, Hyman and Jacobs propose that students average a page every 15 minutes. Tape-recording is a "monumental waste of time," they write. "How could it be better the second time? If you're ever in a position to generate an excellent set of notes, it's surely when you're maximally engaged."

In preparing for exams, Jacobs and Hyman suggest students look for old tests at the library or at frat and sorority houses. Many professors are too overworked, they say, to invent new questions, especially for multiple choice or essay questions that contain several parts. In review sessions, Jacobs and Hyman tell students to listen for cues from their teaching assistant, such as "You know what would make a good exam question."

And students should always ensure ahead of time that they understand exam lingo. There's a difference between the instructions "compare" and "contrast" and "describe" and "evaluate." When asked to advance a hypothesis, for instance, they shouldn't start thinking they should summarize.

As well, it's the authors' opinion that any exam that looks like a "pig mess" gets a C. Students should avoid green or purple felt-tip pens, and write with black ink. Finally, if they're running out of time and it's a multiple choice test, Jacobs and Hyman instruct students to "blacken all the D's." If it's a math exam, they should include the strategy they would have used to solve the problem.

3 Emailing a prof from your hotchick@hotmail account is a bad idea

Professors' Guide devotes a whole chapter to the dos and don'ts of seeing the professor during office hours. McClaren, for his part, says "good luck to you." With a thousand students in a lecture theatre, it's "just not going to happen," he says of one-on-one meetings with every student.

Should you get an appointment, the book offers several points of etiquette:

1. Don't expect the professor to give you the answer.
2. Take notes during your meeting. Tell the prof when you don't understand.
3. Never lock horns with the professor and if you do, go back and apologize.
4. Email is perfectly acceptable but make sure you set up a reputable account. Don't email from your hotchick@hotmail account.
5. Begin email respectfully. "Dear Professor," and "Thank you for your kind help."
6. Don't email incessantly and don't assume that you're hated if you don't get a prompt reply.

And for those students who really are clueless:

7. An office appointment is not the time to "level" with the prof that you hate the course. M

5 Beware the 'birdy' sounding sociology course. It could assume a command of stats, and if you're not good with numbers...

HOW YOUNG IS TOO YOUNG?

We think schooling kids early will make them smarter. Are we wrong?

BY CATHY GULLI • This July, while kids across England revelled in the freedom of a summer break from school, a new law called the Childcare Act was receiving royal assent. It requires all early learning and child care facilities—public or private—to follow a universal framework for what to teach young children ranging from infants and toddlers to four year-olds. Come September 2008, under the Early Years Foundation Stage model, there will be compulsory programs with standardized educational goals in place at any centre for kids. The aim is for all children, no matter where they are or what their family situation, to have the opportunity to learn the same skills in the same way.

It's an admirable objective, but there's probably more to learn from the ferocious debate that erupted when this early childhood education bill was announced last autumn. The federal department for education said the bill would simply make law the "Birth to Three Matters" framework that had heretofore been merely a series of recommendations for early learning and child care centres to follow voluntarily. In essence, it would create a national curriculum for toddlers. Immediately, reports forewarned of babies having to take exams and recite multiplication tables, and of a Soviet-inspired education system—one whose jurisdiction even included potty training. "We are now in danger of taking away children's childhood when they leave the maternity ward," huffed a spokesperson for parents' associations in England. "It's absolute madness."

As it happens, there were no such plans, and the Birth to Three Matters framework is incorporated within the Early Years Foundation Stage. But the public panic that reverberated throughout England reflects an increasingly common anxiety that parents—and governments—around the world experience over what to do with young children to ensure their future success. Conventional wisdom says that when it comes to learning, the sooner the better, kids are like sponges, so flood them with information. And early learning centres such as daycares and preschools are almost invariably touted as the most promising arena for that education.

Some studies have, certainly, shown gains among children in high-quality child care. A recent report by the Waterloo, Ont.-based Canadian Centre for Knowledge Mobilisation evaluated the findings of 66 scientific studies on the impact of child care centres on early development. It concludes that exposure to these places produces better cognitive and language development in children. What's more, it suggests that the sooner kids start at early education centres, and the more time spent there, the better their development.

But now there is a growing collection of evidence that suggests just the opposite—that early childhood education actually harms children. Cognitive benefits are inconsistent at best. According to one surprising study, the more time spent in early learning facilities, the more likely that a child's social development will slow down. And mounting expectations for kids to achieve and succeed at younger and younger ages is being characterized as "white-collar child abuse" by at least one observer, Maxine Schnall, co-author of *From Suckermother to Smart Mom*. "The extraordinary pressure that parents exert on children at an early age to learn beyond their developmental level has created physical and emotional problems in children. And that's abuse," she says. "What makes it all so sad is that it's not intentional."

Of course not. Early childhood education is supposed to help parents help their kids. And truth be told, it helps many parents, too. Economics has made putting children into the care of others an increasingly appealing idea, if not entirely unavoidable. "Part of it might come out of necessity for us," explains Diana Skinner, whose first son, Elliot, just turned two. She chose to stay at home with him while her husband, Matt, worked as a teacher in Toronto. But that will likely change. "Heading into the fall I'm looking for work, because we just don't have enough income," she says. Approximately two thirds of mothers with children younger than age 6 are in the labour force, according to a 2003 Statistics Canada study. Other parents go back to work out of boredom, according to Schnall. "They feel deprived of adult companionship and the ego satisfaction that you get from the outside world that you don't get being isolated with children," she explains. No matter the motivation, for many parents early learning centres—preschools, daycares or nurseries—hold particular value as babysitting services with educational benefits.

Nevertheless, parents also put a lot of faith—and money—into early learning because they believe it will give their children a head start.



PRESCHOOL may boost cognitive abilities but, surprisingly, hamper kids' social skills

SCOTT TROYANOS/AP

The popularity of Baby Einstein products and the array of "educational toys" available is proof that parents are in a hurry to start their children's academic careers. And given the weighty pronouncements from organizations such as UNESCO, which states that "the foundations of human development are laid during the child's early years," it's no wonder they feel a sense of urgency about when and how to get that underway. "You're always worrying about doing the right thing, that's definitely always on your mind," says Skinner. Adding to the rush is fear among some parents that they're not capable of teaching their kids all the skills and information they'll need heading into kindergarten. Others fret about depriving children of a life spent playing with kids, and learning how to share and co-operate with others. And so the race to get them learning—with toys, in classrooms or with other children—is on. An early learning program developed by a Duke University professor even has five-year-olds deconstructing sentences and speaking foreign languages. "Parents really do believe that this is going to help their kids be smarter," Skinner observes.

Whether it actually will depends on a slew of variables. For starters, in Canada, early childhood education isn't defined in any one way across the country, which makes setting goals and tracking kids' progress all but impossible. "Child care is not conceptualized as education in Canada," says Martha Friendly, coordinator of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto, who supports equal accessibility to child care. Each province and territory has its own ways of providing early childhood education, and it generally comes under the jurisdiction of the department of education or social services. Lately, federal governments have debated a national program (under the Liberals) or a taxable benefit to parents and the creation of new child care spaces, as is the current plan under the Conservatives. Political rhetoric endorses early education as a panacea for social and economic problems, or as a fundamental human right.

ENGLAND'S NEW LAW WILL IN ESSENCE CREATE A CURRICULUM FOR TODDLERS. A PARENTS' GROUP CALLED IT 'MADNESS.'

Australian psychologist Steve Biddulph takes a radically different view. The author of *Raising Babies: Should Under 3s Go To Nursery?*, he had a complete reversal in his views on early childhood education. He used to advocate the use of daycares, but says the swelling body of research showing negative effects on development and mental health has convinced him parents should stay home with their kids for as long as possible. "The rapid adoption of nursery care in the early years has been a social experiment," he recently wrote, "a gamble taken by millions of parents. The results of the experiment are now emerging." Over the past decade, researchers have learned that the brain grows in response to love and affection during the first two years of life, he says, without this, babies' brains don't develop fully. "Children raised without sufficient loving care do not fully become the human beings they were meant to be."

But even observers who take a more generous view of preschool disagree with the presumption that all children benefit greatly from early education. "They're arguing that preschool helps all kids for a very long period of time. And I don't know of any scholar that's found that result," says Bruce Fuller, a professor of education and public policy at the University of California at Berkeley. Researchers there and at Stanford University published a report last November entitled "How Much Is Too Much?", which analyzed the influence of preschool centres on children's development in the U.S. The Berkeley-Stanford study suggests early learning best serves the poorest children in society, who tend to show the strongest gains in pre-reading (for example, recognizing letters, counting blocks) and math skills after attending preschool. "Kids from poor families have much [fewer] resources in their home. Their parents may have less time, less materials, and are less likely to read to them," explains Friendly. That's why a recent paper published by the C.D. Howe Institute, a Toronto-based think tank, suggests directing child care centres at neighbourhoods with at-risk families. "[It's] not been shown that for stable, middle-class families, early childhood education adds much, if anything," says co-author John Richards, an economist and public policy professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

Conversely, the Berkeley-Stanford study shows children from middle- and upper-class homes see only modest gains compared with their peers who don't attend preschool. But the most surprising—and arguably most worrisome—suggestion was that any cognitive gains from early childhood education may come at the expense of social development. The study warns against children attending preschool or daycare for more than five or six hours a day, or up to 30 hours a week. "Institutions, no matter how small and warm and fuzzy, start to regulate kids' behaviours," says Fuller. "Once you rigidify and routinize

BLACKBOARD JUNGLE

BAD TASTE IN CLOTHES MEANS MASS EXPULSION

Inappropriate clothing has been a problem at Indiana's Morton High School. It's gotten so bad that, last Wednesday, the school's no-nonsense principal, Theresa Meyerink, ordered 128 students to go home and change, 10 per cent of the entire enrolment. However unpopular the move was with students, the school board stood behind her. Said president Rebecca Ward: "I'd be supportive if half the school was sent home. Our schools are for education."

that, then kids start to shut down, and their cognitive growth starts to slow down." That makes intuitive sense to Skinner.

The Berkeley-Stanford study found that child care centres suppressed children's social development, self conttol, interpersonal skills, and motivation once they entered kindergarten. Kids were more aggressive and impulsive with one another. The worst affected were children who attended early learning centres before age 2. "So if kids spend more [than 30 bours a week] in preschool centres, they're simply not keeping pace in their acquisition of social skills," says Fuller. Another C D Howe study, this one published in February, came to a similar conclusion. It examined Quebec's universal early education and child care program. Its conclusion: "children were worse off" since the program started in 1997, it connects the increased use of child care to a decrease in the well being of children, who exhibit anxiety and hyperactivity. "Parents have to think, when their child comes home counting to 30, do those skills outweigh some modest slowdown in social development?" says Fuller.

Parents, it seems, should also be thinking about how *they* will be affected by putting their kids into early learning or daycare centres. According to the Quebec study, parents are worse off since the child care program came into play. Mothers of children in daycare are more depressed than their average counterparts. More of them report hostile or "aversive interactions" with their kids. And there is a significant deterioration in marital relationships. None of this is good for children, and it comes as no surprise to Schnall, who believes that the pressure parents put on kids reflects the pressure they feel themselves. Child care, for instance, doesn't come cheap. "Many families, in order to keep up their financial level, have to work really hard. That creates a lot of pressure. Throw kids in the mix, and there are a lot of arguments about who's not doing enough, and why," surmises Schnall.

What's more, she says, many parents suffer from chronic guilt and insecurity. They want the best for their child, but there's no clear consensus on what that means. And there probably never will be because every family has different financial needs and a unique list of priorities and child-rearing philosophies. Fuller says research helps raise parents' awareness "that they need to think about and observe what their children are getting out of preschool, both on the cognitive side and on the social development side." But the only certainty, he says, is, "Little kids are active seekers of new stimuli. They're active explorers of new tasks." There's no disputing that children's education begins at birth. Where, when and how it should take place is another matter. M



ONE writer seas the pressures on kids as white-collar ebuse

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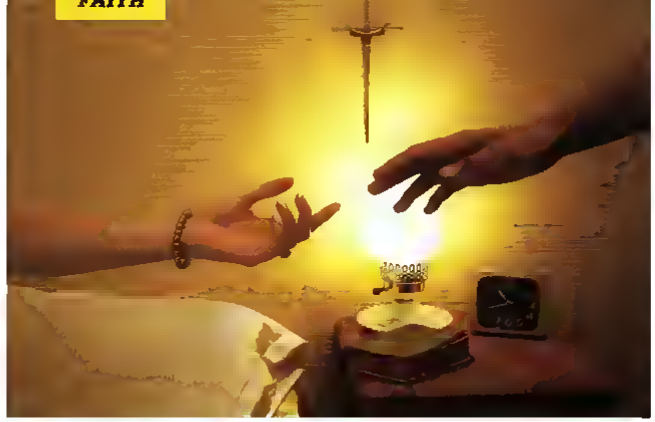
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MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE: One author says keeping lights on and eyes open is the key

ROBYN CUMMING

YES! OH GOD! YES!

For some Christians, better sex is the best way to save marriage

BY KEN MACQUEEN • Conservative Christians—who see marriage under attack from infidelity and divorce, from common-law and same-sex unions—are increasingly taking to the bedrooms in a stirring and often joyfully kinky defence of the institution. Bedrooms, in fact, are the least of it. Kitchens are hot. So are garages, the back seat of the family sedan, and maybe a secluded corner of a public park, if the spirit so moves. The point being: sex within a monogamous marriage has plenty to offer the amorous adventurer, so why deviate?

The image of the Christian marriage as a dutiful vehicle for procreation or, worse, as the institution where sex goes to die, is obviously a bum rap. Not that there's anything wrong with bum raps between consenting marital partners, judging by the spicy menu on offer at church-sponsored marital enrichment classes, in religious self-help books, and at conferences. Then there's the new breed of websites, where scripture coexists with unblushing advice on spanking, bondage and oral sex—and where the product line ranges from lace-up leathers to restraint chairs. The new openness is not just an attempt to keep the oh God! oh God! oh God! in the Christian marriage. It's a way of fostering intimacy, honesty, joy and fidelity.

"It's a little slower in Canada, but the church is, by and large, ready for some healthy sex," says Doug Weiss, a Colorado-based author and marital counsellor. He travels extensively in both the U.S. and the Canadian West, and offers advice at *www.intimatematters.com*. He spoke at 44 conferences last year, mostly in churches, offering seminars on building happy, healthy sexual relationships as an alternative to pornography and infidelity. Congregations, he says, "are tired about the old message that sex is bad and nasty, but save it for the one you love."

Weiss was a featured speaker in June at the annual Smarter Families conference staged by six theological schools at Trinity Western University, a private Christian university in B.C.'s Fraser Valley. The conferences are billed as a way to "strengthen the institution of traditional marriage, to reduce the prevalence of divorce in our churches and communities." Or, as Weiss puts it: "If you're going to have sex, you might as well have good sex." Make love with the lights on, he advised conference goers. Communicate with each other and keep your eyes open during orgasm, the better to store memories of your partner's pleasure. Couples should draft a "sexual agreement" as to how often they will have sex, and to share responsibility for initiating it. He also advises they create a "sexual garden" of acceptable acts. "Then, play with the fruits they agree are in the garden," he says. "That cuts down a lot of wear and tear sexually."

Other conference participants included Anne and Brian Bercht, an Abbotsford, B.C., couple and co-authors of their tell-all book *My Husband's Affair Became the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me!* The book, and their website, *www.passionatelife.ca*, focus on strategies to prevent affairs, or to rebuild trust and intimacy in damaged relationships. Happy marriages offer longer life, better health and "a lot more sex," the Berchts promise. Weiss offers a similar pitch for traditional marriage. "If Christians are having as good a marriage as they could, it wouldn't matter what the government did about [same-sex] marriages, people would be teased into Christian marriages because this guy is having more sex." Studies show, he adds, "the people who have the highest frequency and quality of sex are religious women."

Tap into *www.themarriagebed.com*—a forum for married Christian couples—and you'll see they may be onto something. The site, created by a Texas couple, Rev. Paul Byerly and his wife, Lori, is a fetching mix of the chaste and the downright randy. A case in point: the site's *ex cathedra* musings on "What's Okay? What's Not?" The general consensus—from sex toys to sexual position—is that married couples can make all the joyful noise they wish. It's in the Bible. That said, coveting thy neighbour's spouse is still out of bounds. So is sex before marriage. And homosexuality? Not a chance. Still, to judge by the chat forums, Christian marriage is one fun club remarkably free of Thou Shalt Nots. The thread on striptease, one of the more demure, would make Carmen Electra blush.

Then there's *www.mybelovedsgarden.net*, based in White Rock, B.C. The site has a bawdy charm all its own. It sells devices from penis pumps to the "Butterfly of Love," and enough leather and chains to clothe a bikers' club. Yet it abjectly apologizes for displaying its lingerie line on female models. To limit their sexual allure, photos of breasts and belly buttons are electronically blurred, and heads and legs are cut off. Still, the site advises: "Wives, may we suggest that you look alone at the lingerie pictures if this is an issue for your spouse."

For at least one satisfied customer, who signs himself "Father of Six," this seems not a concern. While it may be true that sex is bad, he writes in the customer comment section, it gets better with practice. M



ST. JOSEPH IS CERTAIN TO ADD CURB APPEAL

With local real estate in a slump, Daytona Beach, Fla., realtor Chad Sheffer was skeptical when his client buried a statue of St. Joseph in his front lawn. "I was like, okay, whatever." But what should have taken six months to sell sold just two weeks later, in a bidding war. Local Christian stores stock statues of the patron saint of carpenters, and they're selling out. Reseller Jacalyn Johnson moves 20 a week. "It's because of the slump," she says.

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Ready, set, throw away the key

Canadians crack the underground sport of lock-picking just for fun

BY BARBARA RIGHTON • At the Riviera Hotel on the Las Vegas strip earlier this month, Winnipeg salesman Josh Nekrep made history with a tiny tension wrench in one hand and a rake pick in the other. The venue was Defcon 14, billed as the largest underground hacking event in the world. The competition was speed lock-picking, a first for the computer-crazed Defcon, and the first time a Canadian had entered a recognized lock-picking competition. At home, as a co-founder of the hobby group Locksport International, Nekrep, 28, presides over lock-picking chapters that have sprung up in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, the U.S., Australia and Portugal over the past year. He also serves as an administrator of *www.lockpicking101.com*, a how-to site that boasts a lock-picking membership of 20,000 in North America—up from 7,000 in 2004. At home, he is numero uno—a guy who can open a Master padlock, the kind most people have on their garden sheds, in 16 seconds. At Defcon, he was nervous.

While a crowd of curious geeks—including some 50 challengers—watched, Nekrep took his place in the first 15-minute heat with five other pickers. The locks were supplied by Locksport co-founder and *lockpicking101* co-administrator Kim Bohnet, 33, of Camrose, Alta., a sport lock picker and professional locksmith. They were made by Weser and were "not particularly difficult," Nekrep says. But they were mounted on tiny doors, which made them harder to manoeuvre. (Most lock-pickers prefer to hold locks in the palm of their hands.) "You had to unlock the lock and open the door to stop the timer," Nekrep says. "There was a bank of timers set up. It was very cool."

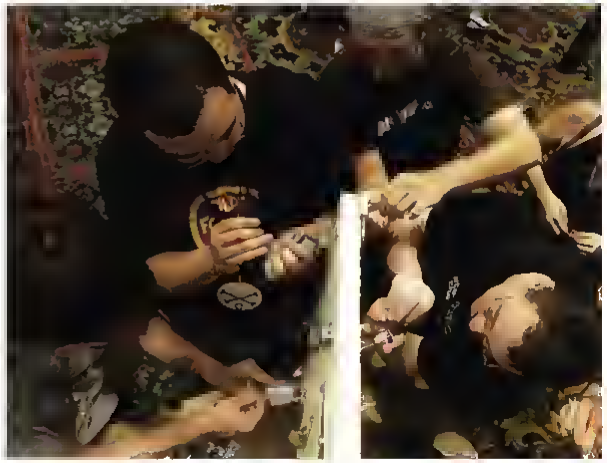
Nekrep never made it to round two. "I did poorly," is all he wants to say. But his enthusiasm is undimmed. Lock picking as a sport is still in its infancy in North America and Nekrep is excited about his plans to help run a bigger and better competition at Defcon next year. In Holland and Germany, where contests have been under way since 1997, champion lock pickers have become celebrities worthy of the ultimate German accolade, "Master of the Universe." Like Nekrep, the man who is credited with starting sport lock-picking—Steffen Wenéry of Germany—began to fiddle around with locks as a kid. The fascination is the same for both of them. Like all true hackers, Nekrep says, lock-pickers just like to learn how things work.

The process sounds easy. Simply put, locks have an internal series of pins. With a tension wrench and various different picks, a picker can move up the pins and open the lock. But not all locks are created equal. Pins can vary in number and shape. And since the lock picker is working blind, he has to learn to apply the right pressure and listen for the faint sounds of success. Manual dexterity is a given. In his business as a locksmith, says Bohnet, "you find ways to cheat." People who have locked themselves out of their houses or their cars, for example, want doors opened fast, not with finesse, and sometimes the locks suffer. But sport lock pickers often exchange locks in competitions: it is a rule that the internal workings must not be damaged.

The beginners' bible is still the 15-year-old "MIT Guide to Lock Picking," a 48-page manual prepared by "Ted the Tool" to facilitate the student sport of "urban exploration," in other words, breaking and entering. "This was maybe the seedy side of lock-picking," Nekrep admits. But both he and Bohnet stress that sport lock-picking is not about committing illegal acts.

In Toronto, Const. Kristine Bacharach is sympathetic. Three years ago, she took a day-long course and got so good, "I went home and picked my front door lock in five minutes," she says. Her skills subsequently enabled her to open a high-rise apartment door and help an elderly woman. As for the legalities, she says, there is nothing wrong with picking a lock, per se, as long as aficionados "do not use their powers for evil."

Far from it, says Bohnet. Not only would Locksport International eject anyone suspected of criminal intent, he adds, but, "When we find weaknesses in locks, we inform the manufacturers. Our influence is not great, but that has been changing." M



INTENSE COMPETITION at Defcon 14: Lock-pickers like to learn how to solve puzzles

JANE KALINOWSKY/AP/CP

IN EUROPE, CHAMPIONS EARN THE ULTIMATE HACKER ACCOLADE, 'MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE'

ONE FOR THE BOOKS

HOMING PIGEON LOSES DIRECTION, GETS HOLIDAY

John Stewert released his homing pigeon, Judy, in a 1,000-km flying race from northern France to Northumberland, England. Somehow Judy got lost and landed on an island in the Dutch Caribbean. Stewert, a member of the East Chevington Homing Society, has received word from finders on St. Eustatius that Judy is safe. "I'm quite jealous, really," he says. "I wish I was in the Caribbean rather than in Northumberland."



AT THE TORONTO film festival, he'll host a gala to raise funds for child-focused charities

GOODWILL HUNTING

Matt Damon uses his celebrity for a good cause: helping Africa

BY NICHOLAS KÖHLER • There's been much eye rolling of late in regards to celebrity antics in Africa. Madonna pours money into Malawi. Activist heartthrob George Clooney fears he caught malaria while warning of genocide in Darfur. Even Lindsay Lohan muses she'd like to take a break from the party circuit to visit Kenya. Sometimes, though, a Hollywood star scores a coup. When Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt stopped in Namibia to bear baby Shiloh last May, they transformed the paparazzi hordes into a campaign that captured international attention for a little-known and troubled country.

Matt Damon, who arrives in Toronto this month on the crest of completing *Ocean's Thirteen*, may manage the same trick. On Sept. 10, as the Toronto International Film Festival turns Lake Ontario's north shore into a riviera of stars, the city's monied classes will dine with displaced Hollywood types at the second annual One X One Benefit Gala, which last year, with actress Kate Hudson's help, raised $1.3 million for child-focused charities. Damon's role in the event this year, which also features development bigwigs like Jeffrey Sachs—the economist and UN special adviser helping Madonna on her Malawi project—is an elegant combination of his humanitarian ambitions and the glam of a TIFF-sanctioned fundraiser. In this, Damon may be taking lessons on how to deflect one's celebrity glow onto worthier subjects from his *Ocean's* co-star Pitt—rumoured to be slated, with Jolie, for a surprise showing at the dinner (much as U2's Bono did last year).

"There's nothing more annoying than watching some self-righteous celebrity tell you how you should live your life," Damon recently told *Maclean's*. "Unfortunately, more people will show up to hear me talk about Africa than they will to hear Jeffrey Sachs. I think that's crazy. But it's the world we're living in." If Damon is no Sachs, he's not entirely a dilettante either. In May, under the aegis of Bono's One campaign, Damon spent a week in South Africa and Zambia, in one village following a 14 year-old girl to the well where she collects water each day. Asked if she'd remain in her village, the girl smiled and said she would go to Lusaka, the Zambian capital, to become a nurse. "I remember wanting to be an actor and saying, 'I'm going to go to New York,'" Damon says. "I so related to that dream of hers." Such encounters left him with the conviction that, while things in Africa are bad, they're not insurmountable.

One way he's trying to help is with *Running the Sahara*, a documentary he's producing through LivePlanet, a production company he founded with his friend Ben Affleck. The film, which Damon will narrate and which begins shooting next month, will follow three ultra marathoners—including Canadian Ray Zahab—as they attempt to run across the Sahara. Damon has attached the film to what he calls his "clean water initiative" by allowing people to pledge dollars against the trio's progress over the three-month run. The money will go to sinking wells and otherwise securing clean water on the continent.

This summer, Joelle Berdugo Adler, president of jeans outfit Diesel Canada and the founder of One X One, approached Damon about hosting the gala. The actor agreed. "It's a chance, quite candidly, to raise so much money that I have to make myself available," says Damon. What drives him to pepper his busy shooting schedule with such work? Damon recalls a quote from Gandhi his mother placed on the refrigerator when he was a child. "No matter how insignificant what you do may seem," it said, "it's most important that you do it." Adler hammered out the gala details with Damon just three weeks ago. "The first impression you get is exactly what you see—this really genuine, beautiful, caring human being with a big smile." She plans to announce a One X One donation to Damon's clean water initiative at the event. *Running the Sahara*, it's hoped, will premiere at next year's One X One benefit. The irony here is that Damon, the A-list actor, is leveraging his celebrity to bring aid to people to whom his name and face may mean little. Indeed, in Africa, he says, "they don't know who I am." M



CHINA: TOO MANY STIFFS AT ONE FUNERAL

Farmers in eastern China's Jiangsu province have for centuries believed that the more people who attend your funeral, the more honour you receive. Some funerals have lately taken to hiring strippers, and with great success. But it's also earned the attention of police, who arrested five peelers at one recent rite. To snuff out "funeral misdeeds," police set up a snitch line, and officials published an edict requiring the bereaved to submit funeral plans

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'IT IS NOT GOOD FOR JAPAN TO BE SO DEPENDNT ON THE MIDDLE EAST'—JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER JUNICHIRO KOIZUMI, WHO HEADED TO CNTRAL ASIA THIS WEEK IN SEARCH OF ENERGY DEALS

DAMON ALLEN
PASSING A LEGEND IN THE RECORD BOOKS

Toronto Argonaut quarterback **Damon Allen** is 164 yards shy of football history. The 43-year old pivot will likely set pro football's all time passing record—currently held by legendary flame-thrower and recent National Football League hall-of-fame inductee **Warren Moon**—in Hamilton next week. Allen, who has played 22 seasons in the Canadian Football League, was forced to put his chase of Moon (who played six years with the Edmonton Eskimos, winning five Grey Cups, before throwing 49,325 of his 70,553 career passing yards in the National Football League) on hold for about a month after breaking the middle finger on his throwing hand minutes into Toronto's season opener. Barring another injury, Allen should have no trouble getting by the lowly Tiger Cats—and into the record book—during the Argos' annual Labour Day classic.

LI KA SHING
BILLIONAIRE'S 'THIRD SON' TO GET BIG PAYDAY

Not to be outdone by other mega-rich philanthropists (**Bill Gates** and **Warren Buffett**) who have been giving away billions to charity, **Li Ka Shing**—the 10th richest person in the world—announced last week that he will donate one third of his estimated $20.9-billion fortune. Known as "Superman" in Hong Kong for his business prowess, the 78-year-old former high school dropout, who used to sweep factory floors, is chairman of multinational conglomerate Cheung Kong (Holdings) Limited. When he dies, the money will go to the Li Ka Shing Foundation, the charitable organization he founded in 1980 and describes as his "third son." Through the foundation, he has committed nearly $1 billion to medical and education projects. And Li has taken steps to ensure that every penny of his donation goes to charity—not even his family will have a say over how the money is spent.

RICKY GERVAIS
FINGER-POINTING BEGINS AT THE OFFICE

Microsoft Corp. began an investigation last week into how two private training videos made for the company by British comedian **Ricky Gervais** appeared on the Internet. Gervais—who made the two 15-minute videos, titled *The Office Values*, in 2003 on the condition that they never be made public—appears as David Brent, the critically acclaimed character he played on *The Office*. In the videos, meant as a lighthearted approach to work-related issues, Brent visits Microsoft's British offices and informs the staff that he would make a great manager. He offers workplace advice and describes Microsoft's billionaire boss as "Sir William of Gates."

GLORIA ARROYO
AVERTING A POLITICAL TAKEDOWN—AGAIN

Philippine President **Gloria Arroyo** survived an impeachment attempt last week—the second in as many years—over allegations of human rights abuses, corruption and election fraud. Although she denies claims that her family has accepted bribes and that she's taken part in vote-rigging, Arroyo did admit to a "lapse in judgment" when in 2004 she phoned an election officer on the day the vote was counted. Still, the House of Representatives voted 173 to 32 in favour of throwing out the impeachment request, and blocked a vote in the Senate, which is dominated by the opposition. Arroyo's opponents promise to continue their efforts. But since her approval rating is up 10 per cent in the last six months, the economy is on an upswing, and the constitution only allows one impeachment bid a year against a president, Arroyo's job appears to be safe for now.

AARON HARRIS/CP; SAMANTHA SIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; JO HALE/GETTY IMAGES; AARON FAVILA/AP; CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

JUNICHIRO KOIZUMI
PM HEADS TO CENTRAL ASIA TO RE-ENERGIZE

With only a few weeks left in power, Japanese Prime Minister **Junichiro Koizumi** set off this week to Central Asia, marking the first time a Japanese PM has tried to make political inroads in the region. With stops in the oil- and gas-rich nations of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Koizumi's main focus is energy. "It is not good for Japan," he says, "to be too dependent on the Middle East." The 64 year old, who is expected to step down in September, has spent the last few months trying to cement deals for his energy-starved nation and promote Japan in the quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The trip is also thought to be an effort to counter China and Russia's influence—especially since the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which links the two superpowers to the resource-rich region.

YURIKO NAKAO/REUTERS; JACK GUEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; HERMANN J. KNIPPERTZ/AP; MARK RENDERS/GETTY IMAGES

THOMAS LUBANGA
THE SLOW-SPINNING WHEELS OF JUSTICE

His soldiers are accused of murder, torture, rape and mutilation—in one massacre, they are said to have killed civilians with a sledgehammer—but this week, at the International Criminal Court, Congo rebel leader **Thomas Lubanga** was only charged with recruiting child soldiers. The news angered human rights groups, but the ICC, which was set up in 2002 to deal with war crimes and genocide, says it started with this charge because it has evidence. "That doesn't mean the door is shut to other crimes," says ICC deputy prosecutor **Fatou Bensouda**. Lubanga, who is the first person charged by the court, led the Union of Congolese Patriots in a six year civil war during the '90s. He was finally arrested in 2005 after nine Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers were murdered. Next stop: The Hague, where he will face trial.

ZARA PHILLIPS
NOT RIDING ON ANY ROYAL COATTAILS

Zara Phillips—the Queen's eldest granddaughter—was once dubbed the "Royal Rebel" by the tabloids for her navel and tongue piercings. But last weekend, she improved her image by winning the individual gold medal at the World Equestrian Games in Germany. Phillips, 25, is the first Brit in 20 years to take the top spot in this event, doing so with help from her 13-year-old chestnut gelding, **Toytown**. Zara's success may also be genetic: her mother, **Princess Anne**, won the European equestrian championship in 1971, and father **Capt. Mark Phillips** rode with the British team. The favourite to win gold at the 2008 Beijing Olympics does suffer from some familial disadvantage. Phillips is not entitled to her grandmother's wealth, and had to secure commercial sponsors.

MOAMMAR GADHAFI
WILL A HIGHWAY STOP HUMAN TRAFFIC?

Libyan dictator **Moammar Gadhafi** is refusing to stop the flood of illegal immigrants from his country to Italy until the European country agrees to help fund a new 1,600 km stretch of highway. Gadhafi argues that the $4 billion of concrete that will link two Libyan towns near Egypt with two, including the capital Tripoli, on Libya's western side, should be paid for by Italy as compensation for its occupation of his country starting in 1911. Until Italy agrees, Gadhafi won't stem the flood of stowaways from Libyan ports to the Italian island of Lampedusa. More than 1,500 landed there last week. Italy is setting up two task forces—similar to units that investigate the Mafia and terrorism—to deal with illegal immigrants. Talks between Italian and Libyan officials are planned for this week. Experts are not surprised that Gadhafi, who has ruled for more than 30 years, would use his own citizens as bargaining chips.



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ALL PHOTOS BY CATE COCHRAN EXCEPT NOAH AND MICHAEL HELM BY SARAH MACLACHLAN AND NOAH AND JAMES UNGALAAQ BY JOHN MACDONALD

In search of nowhere

Noah Richler's literary atlas is a sensitive, shrewd portrait of Canada BY BRIAN BETHUNE

books

The nerve novelist Yann Martel struck in 2002, when he called Canada "the greatest hotel on earth" after winning the Booker prize, continues to reverberate. No matter that Martel is in his fourth year of patiently explaining he only meant there were a lot of interesting people from all around the world living here now, everyone knows the artist is the last man to grasp his own meaning. Commentators weighed in, sure *they* knew what Martel meant, because it was an idea in the air at a time when multicultural Canadian fiction was exploding into international awareness, an idea the novelist seemed to have captured in an arresting metaphor: Canada as the perfect rooming house, a peaceful, accommodating post-nation-state. Or as a soulless railway terminus, a place that demands little of its citizens and stands for nothing in international affairs.

But hotel good or hotel bad, few tried the argument that Martel was merely a writer giving a thank you speech. Because this country is so insecure in its very existence, and lacks any sort of agreed upon national history, we have always put a heavy weight on our writers to explain us to ourselves, a reliance that has only grown along with CanLit's international reputation. As the controversy over Martel's comment showed, in a culture revealed and defined by its stories, no literary theory can ever be purely literary, can ever escape making an inherently political judgment. The same, axiomatically, goes for a "literary atlas," although, to be fair, Noah Richler didn't even try to avoid politics.

This is My Country, What's Yours? (McClelland & Stewart) was a monumental undertaking, involving four years of work and interviews with 100 writers before Richler could shape it into the CBC Radio series that preceded the book. Immensely thought-provoking—and, at times, simply provoking—the book by its title might seem to put Richler firmly on the relativist "good hotel" side of the Martel debate, where any view of Canada is as valid as any other. But that's not true. Richler is really relativist only in his epilogue, where he floats the possibility he believes what he does about Canadian writing—that it's the product of our unforgiving land—because of his own personal circumstances. Being one of five children of iconic Montreal novelist Mordecai and his wife, Florence, meant being part of a self-reliant nuclear family that lived, physically, either in England or Canada and, psychically, somewhere between the two. The rootless outsider's perspective may have made him more nationalistic than many more anchored to their particular place within Canada. The epilogue is charming and very Canadian in its polite and slightly apologetic tone. You can tell that Richler doesn't really mean a word of it.

ASKED WHY SO MUCH HISTORICAL FICTION CAME OUT OF SASKATCHEWAN, GUY VANDERHAEGHE SNARLED, 'BECAUSE WE'VE GOT NO F---ING FUTURE, THAT'S WHY'

Canada may have its "illogical, accidental beginnings," Richler says in an interview, but circumstances have turned it into fortune's favourite—a place well worth defending. Everyone who has arrived here since the glaciers began to melt 17,000 years ago has been whipsawed by climate and history: First Nations savaged by European guns and germs; conquered French Canadians; British refugees from victorious Yankees; wave after wave of survivors from the 20th century's murderous spasms. Our struggles with the land and our lack of a binding national myth have combined to make Canada barren ground for epic thinking—a tremendous boon according to Richler, who sees the world's current convulsions as rooted not so much in a clash of civilizations as in a clash of *narrative* forms. Canada, the anti-epic society, is fertile soil for the novel, an inherently individualistic, rights-based form of story that has done more than laws or government programs to give Canadians sympathetic insight into other lives and other cultures.

For a Canadian, arguments about epic thinking and national mythology naturally turn to a comparison with the United States. That's only a small part of *This Is My Country*, and mercifully so, because it brings out Richler's worst instincts. His anti-Americanism is rawly expressed, at times almost cartoonish. The American Dream—essentially, from log cabin to White House (or to billionaire's corner office)—is both "a very, very good myth" and "a lie," as most recently proved by the hurricane Katrina fiasco. That's a crude comparison Richler would never use elsewhere; he may believe that Aboriginal founding myths fell in cultural battle before the settlers' wily novelistic narratives, but it's inconceivable he'd ever call those myths *lies*. And his adoption of poet George Bowering's gratingly cute term for citizens of the republic, USAmericans, is simply irritating.

In his own country, however, Richler is sensitive, shrewd and subtle. While Canada was once—geographically and metaphysically—Nowhere, a place where Nothing happened, time passes and things change. Writers wrest Nowhere *onto* the map, Richler writes, and as history accumulates, Nowhere becomes Somewhere, "an Address with Virtues." To the point, in fact, that Douglas Coupland doesn't hesitate to call being middle-class Canadian today "the biggest grand prize of all in the genetic and geographical lottery that is life on earth."

Canadians have moved from the Age of Invention (when stories bring a place into existence), through the Age of Mapping (when stories "chart the history, geography, and imagination of a country"), into our current Age of Argument (when we debate what it all means). The present moment is both opportunity and danger. We could, given the multiplicity of voices in Canada, fall into the relativist trap and decide there is nothing distinctly Canadian we can offer the world. Or we could, just possibly, shake things out into a common view, a kind of national epic that would guard against the danger of becoming what critics of the hotel metaphor fear, a common address rather than a common society. In either case, Richler argues, we are on so

RICHLER AND COMPANY The author in conversation with (clockwise from top left) Cree poet Sky Dancer, Michaal Ondaatje, short-story writer Nancy Lee, Robert Bringhurst, Margaret Atwood, Michael Turner, Saskatchewan writer Michael Helm, and James Ungalaaq

beautiful a knife edge that we have to be careful in what we wish for. "The business of this age," he says, "is the reconciliation of our novelistic pluralist values with a nation worth preserving."

Surveying the three ages and talking to writers from coast to coast, Richler finds commonalities in the way we tell stories—the metaphor of the house, for instance (standing for protection against what Margaret Atwood calls Bad Mommy Nature), or the motif of the photo (which once indicated that the interesting stuff happened elsewhere). And then there's the big one, the unifying thread that links our writers across even the French-English divide: the myth of disappointment. The term is another of Richler's bland Canadian ironies. Disappointment hardly seems to describe the emotion behind *Je me souviens* or the curse of the Saskatchewan farmer in the old joke who, having learned hail has destroyed his crops and his wife has run off with the hired hand, raises his fists to heaven and cries "Goddamn the CPR!" But it works for most of us, most of the time, reflecting our mixture of reliance upon and distrust of authority in a land of company towns and far-away government. Here Richler is at the essence of his argument: the stories that bind us the most, across language and region, are ones that teach us to beware of blind allegiance.





...AND MORE: Richler with (clockwise from left) Saskatchewan author Jacqueline Baker, B.C. writer Lee Henderson, and Governor General's Award winner Guy Vanderhaeghe

Most immigrant writers, including those who have lately added considerable lustre to CanLit's reputation, arrived here from countries where governments routinely do considerably more than disappoint their citizens, so they share that basic distrust of authority. What they don't have, at least at first, is that sense of Canadian place Richler searches for in fiction by the native-born. We look to new Canadians' writing, Richler points out, for unfamiliar stories and "for an affirmation" of Canada as everyone's best possible home. But what of those who never write of Canada, who give real bite to Richler's title question: this is my country, what's yours? How do they fit in his scheme of evolving CanLit? Richler has a long conversation with Rohinton Mistry, who has been ensconced in urban southern Ontario for 30 years writing brilliant fiction about his Indian homeland. Asked if Canada has entered into his work in any way he can identify, Mistry pauses for some time before answering in the affirmative, in a way that resonates with anyone who has trouble articulating what makes home home. Essentially, he told Richler, he writes *here* about *there*: "If either one was taken away from the equation, then it would collapse for me."

It's not all politics and theory, of course. Richler is also deeply interested in literature as literature, in the alchemy of writing itself. When he speaks with Gaetan Soucy, the author of *The Little Girl Who Was Too Fond of Matches*, whose fiction can scarcely be shoehorned into any known theory of writing, Richler quite sensibly lets the Québécois genius carry on an existentialist and aesthetic argument with himself. "Perhaps I have been expecting too much from literature," says Soucy, troubled by the fact he was having difficulty with his current novel. "Basically, I have been asking it to save me." And in St. John's, Richler assembles a group of talented and interconnected Newfoundland artists to discuss the thorny ethics of writing about friends and family.

A good novel, like any genuine work of art, requires what Graham Greene called "the sliver of ice" lodged in a true artist's heart, the willingness to portray emotional truth even when others see it as a betrayal. Among those present in St. John's were author Michael Winter and filmmaker Mary Lewis, Winter's companion during the time he wrote *This All Happened*. The novel's protagonist bore a remarkable resemblance to Winter, and his lover was much like Lewis. She thought she was all right with that "because I knew where the fiction is and where the reality ends." But everything changed when they heard, in a crowded family kitchen during a Christmas visit, a radio discussion about who the characters really were. "Michael and I looked at each other, and we looked at my parents, and Michael kind of caved in the middle of it all, and his face died, and that was the turning point for me. I realized that even friends could not help but draw the comparison."

Historical fiction, too, often tiptoes through the same ethical minefield. Sometimes relatives and admirers of recent historical personages object just as much as hurt lovers, other times, as with the case of the made-up mistress Wayne Johnston gave Joey Smallwood in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, they don't. But no fewer than three Newfoundland women have claimed to be the "real" person behind Johnston's entirely fictional character. The issue is important because historical fiction is one of CanLit's dominant genres. One reason we love to write it, it's clear, is to *create* history, to make up for its perceived lack in Canada. Authors also relish the chance—you can't libel the dead—to name names and play with real-life characters as they wish. Then again, some writers might be motivated by Prairie author Guy Vanderhaeghe's snarled response to a query about why so much great historical fiction was coming out of Saskatchewan: "Because we've got no f--king future, that's why."

Regardless, writers go on writing, ice sliver firmly embedded, and rightly so, in Richler's opinion. To worry about being nice is to "condemn the writing to being second-rate." It's a lesson the Richler children learned for themselves, "at my father's hands," he says. "I had a car accident when I was 16, and a scene not unlike that later appeared in *Joshua Then and Now*." And Noah Richler, under the name of Jude Weiss, is a frequent presence in sister Emma Richler's two books. "My sister does have the necessary ruthlessness," he laughs, "though I don't—I'm too nice a guy to be a novelist." More irony from a first-rate polemicist. M

CATE COCHRAN

University of Ottawa



SHERRAINE MACKAY

>>>>>> THE PEN AND THE SWORD

Sherraine MacKay (née Schalm), a uOttawa English and education graduate, has made her mark with both pen and sword. Sherraine is not only Canada's top women's épée, she's the best in the world — and she recently published her first book, *Running with Swords*. Sherraine is a champion with a truly national reach. She represents Canada in her sport, now training for the 2008 Olympics, and she was part of CBC Radio's "Canada Reads," a widely popular national broadcast.

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SARAH POLLEY makes her directorial debut with *Away From Her*. 'As an actor I slept at night. I don't sleep at night as a filmmaker.'



AWAY FROM HER is based on an Alice Munro short story and stars Julie Christie, Gordon Pinsent, Olympia Dukakis and Michael Murphy

A star is reborn, behind the camera

Directing her first movie, the ever-precocious Sarah Polley finds magic in age-old love

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

Six years ago, Sarah Polley was flying home from Iceland when she first read Alice Munro's story about a woman who forgets she has a husband after a lifetime of marriage. Polley was 21 and freshly in love with the man she would marry. She had just finished shooting an odd little movie in Iceland called *No Such Thing*, co-starring with British screen legend Julie Christie. On the plane, as she read Munro's story in *The New Yorker*, she kept imagining Christie as Fiona, this woman with Alzheimer's disease who enters a retirement home, loses all memory of her mate and falls in love with a male resident. "I don't think I've ever been as affected by a short story," Polley recalls. "I was shell-shocked. I found it so moving and poignant and it went so deep in me. It just sat there for a couple of years before I did anything with it, this vision of a film that wouldn't go away."

Now 27, Polley is sitting in a café near her home in Toronto, sharing a pizza, and talking about how Munro's story, *The Bear Came Over the Mountain*, became *Away From Her*, a movie that she has written and directed starring Gordon Pinsent, Olympia Dukakis—and Julie Christie. Dressed in a dark denim skirt and a low-cut white cotton blouse patterned with eyelets, the former child star looks thoroughly grown up. But you have to wonder what drives a woman in her 20s to devote her feature directing debut to a story of old folks losing their grip.

Polley blames it on young love. "My fascination with those characters," she says, "came from the fact that I'm at the beginning of a relationship." (Three years ago, Polley married film editor David Wharnsby, 37.) "The idea of a long marriage became fascinating to me. What does love look like after reality has had its way with it, as opposed to those first obnoxiously passionate moments? What does it look like after decades—after you've failed each other? That became so much more interesting to me than a traditional love story about people when they're young and dumb and boring."

Mature words. But then *Away From Her* (which has its gala premiere Sept. 11 at the 31st Toronto International Film Festival) is a remarkably mature and accomplished film. In fact, it's one of the most astonishing feature debuts by a Canadian director in ages. Whether it turns out to be a hit is anyone's guess. But there may be a niche at the multiplex for this kind of Bergmanesque romance—a cool, northern answer to *On Golden Pond*, without the sentimental sludge. And given the right marketing push, with any luck it could even find a niche at the Oscars.

Our filmmakers have been struggling to adapt. Canlit since before Polley was born, and largely failing. But at a time when English Canada's film industry is gasping for air—a cinema in search of an audience—*Away From Her* arrives like an oxygen tank. Polley's script transforms Munro's story with a fidelity that inspired the author to leave a glowing message on her answering service. And the movie strikes a rare alchemy. Though intelligent, artful and beautifully understated, it's warmly entertaining and accessible. Coaxing exquisite performances from actors old enough to be her grandparents, Polley has given a second wind to the careers of two Oscar-winning actresses, Dukakis, 75, and Christie, 65—not to mention Pinsent, a lion-in-winter who acts with heartbreaking restraint as he quietly shoulders the drama's emotional weight.

Pinsent, who felt blessed to be handed such a plum role at the age of 76, says Polley displayed relentless focus on the set. "Those of us who knew her as a young actress stood back and watched her with quiet amazement," he recalls, adding that she wasn't shy about reining in her elders. "I have a tendency to invent as I go along. And that didn't seem to be lauded. So I thought, 'I better mind my P's and Q's or I'll never get out of here.'" Pinsent says the young director won the confidence of her cast through an unswerving instinct for the truth of a scene. "She just can't be false, this girl. She really stuck to her guns."

Polley has always conveyed an unflinching honesty on camera. She's been in front of it since she was four, dodging fireballs in Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* and warming the hearth in CBC's *Road to Avonlea*. She came of age with devastating clarity in Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* (1997). And since then, she has charted a maverick course through two dozen movies—some Canadian, some not, most of them adventurously independent.

While *Away From Her* is her first feature as a director, Polley has written and directed five short films. And she's spent more time on movie sets than many actors twice her age. But she's often expressed deep ambivalence about the profession, a serious actor wondering if acting was a serious way to spend her time. When I first interviewed her nine years ago, she dismissed her child star years as an exercise in exploitation. "You're in a really foolish, false world with completely screwed-up people. I don't know if it's any place for an adult, let alone a kid."

The Sweet Hereafter gave her a new respect for acting. Still, she wasn't sure she wanted to make a career out of it. She was more passionate about her left-wing activism, and she bridled against Hollywood attempts to tart her up. While she says her politics haven't softened, she's mellowed. "I don't freak out any more about what my image is. As you get older you realize those things don't define you. It's best to put your militancy into things that make a difference in the world, as opposed to whether or not someone says you were wearing Tommy Hilfiger and you weren't. It's like, who really gives a rat's ass?"

Directing, meanwhile, gave Polley a new appreciation for acting. "In a lot of ways," she says, "being an actor is the worst training you could possibly have for being a director. You've been in this environment your whole life, so you *think* you know it. But 90 per cent of everyone's job on a set, you soon find out, is to protect the actors from any pertinent information. It's not like you're being manipulative or secretive. But they have to go somewhere profound and do something quite emotional. You're not going to mention the weather is screwed and you have to condense three-day scenes into half a day and they better get it right or we're all going to hell."

Before the shoot, Polley turned to Egoyan for advice, and he says he stressed to her that "the actor is the only person who is doing something genuinely magical on set—and that has to be protected at all costs." But Polley is such "an observant actor," he says she has a natural instinct for directing. "She has extraordinary antennae."

Now that she's seen filmmaking from the other side, Polley says, "I look at acting as this enormous privilege I never realized I had. It really is the dream job. As an actor, I slept at night. I don't sleep at night as a filmmaker." She wants to continue to do both, but adds, "I absolutely prefer filmmaking—it's infinitely more fulfilling and exciting."

In casting Christie, Polley chose to work with someone who could be seen as an older, more eccentric version of her dissident self. The British actress, who shot to stardom in the 1960s with *Darling* and *Doctor Zhivago*, turned her back on Hollywood in the 1970s. Lapsing into semi-retirement, she threw herself into causes such as animal rights and honed a feminist critique of her own glamour. And for Polley, who worked with her on two films (*No Such Thing*, *The Secret Life of Words*), she's become something of a hero. "She has one of the most vibrant, curious minds I've known," says Polley. "She has *too much* integrity. And she has one of the more accurate bullshit meters I've ever experienced. Any piece of dialogue, a word that rang slightly false, we would talk about it."

While Polley developed her disdain for showbiz as a child star, Christie rebelled against the much larger role of being a Hollywood sex symbol. "That's pretty complicated for her," says Polley. "She's got this incredible analysis of that time and of herself. I don't think she has a lot of confidence in her ability as an actor. I think she thinks she would have been better at something else."

'THE IDEA OF A LONG MARRIAGE BECAME FASCINATING TO ME. WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE AFTER REALITY HAS HAD ITS WAY WITH IT?'

Although Polley may share some of Christie's ambivalence, by carving out a career as a filmmaker she can insulate herself against the perils of aging as an actress. But it hasn't been easy. In 2004, Polley's first feature script, *Itchy*, a dark drama about a child actor, was shelved after languishing for a year in development limbo—a casualty of a new mandate at Telefilm rejecting auteur films to pursue commercial formula. Funding *Away From Her*, a $4.5-million production, was also an uphill battle. But it was championed by Telefilm's new chief, Wayne Clarkson, who has ushered in a more flexible mandate.

Polley prepared her shoot in meticulous detail, but the one thing she could not control was the weather. She wanted snow. With Christie's character striding into oblivion on cross-country skis, snow serves as the film's founding metaphor, a blank page of lost memory. But in southern Ontario, "there was no freakin' snow this winter," says Polley, who had to push locations further north to find it. She also had her heart set on classic songs by Neil Young, which proved elusive. But after protracted negotiations, her producers snagged the rights to *Harvest Moon* and *Helpless*. With Neil's voice drifting down a wintry ribbon of road, hockey playing on the TV in the retirement home, and reverential readings from Michael Ondaatje, this is a movie that feels gently yet indelibly Canadian.

An actress who once served as a poster girl for protest—she had two baby teeth knocked out by a riot cop at 17—she now has to admit she's happy. "I have no complaints, which is not going to last forever," she says. "But it's really nice." And she gives a lot of the credit to her husband, who edited *Away From Her*. "I feel he's responsible for a lot of what I like about myself, which is fairly recently developed. He's such a listener and so doesn't need to be the centre of attention—everything I'm not."

When they were first dating, Polley recalls, "I remember being really mad with him because he wasn't in love with me yet. I thought, if we weren't in love in three weeks, what was the point? And he said, 'Well, I have butterflies in my stomach, so I guess some people would call that being in love. But I look at my parents and they've been married for 45 years, and sometimes my mom's doing the dishes and my dad will come up and put his arms around her waist and kiss her on the neck. To me, that's what love is. It's endurance.'"

Before Polley gets up to leave, she lets slip that it's her third wedding anniversary. And here she is, spending dinner with a journalist, eating pizza. "It's terrible," she laughs. "But we've spent a lot of time together, sitting in a darkroom editing a movie." Besides, it's early innings for romance. And Polley has her eye trained well beyond the horizon.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA SULIKOWSKA



CANUCK CINEMA cuts loose (from left) *Journals*' Leah Angutimarik, *Monkey Warfare*'s McKellar and Litz, *Fido*'s Moss and Connolly

From zombies to Molotov cocktails

Celebrity fuels the Toronto Film Festival—but homegrown movies offer some kick-ass fun

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

For 10 days every September, limousines choke the streets and paparazzi stake out hotels as Hollywood descends on the Toronto International Film Festival. TIFF has now begun to rival Cannes in stature. This year its celebrity horde seems thicker than ever, with a guest list that includes Sean Penn, Jude Law, Jennifer Lopez, Anthony Hopkins, Sharon Stone, Russell Crowe, Sandra Bullock, Tom Hanks—and Brad Pitt, whose appearance could have the impact of a royal wedding if he chooses to brave the red carpet with Angelina Jolie. Celebrity fuels the media frenzy around the festival. But most of TIFF's program—352 films from 61 countries—is obscure. And one of those countries is Canada.

While fall film festivals have proliferated across the land, TIFF remains the prime showcase for homegrown talent. This year's festival, ever mindful of its domestic mandate, is unveiling 37 new Canadian features. Too often, after playing the festival circuit, these films—at least those from English Canada—never find an audience. But just as everyone is starting to despair over the state of our cinema, among this year's crop are a few solidly entertaining pictures that blast through the art-house cobwebs.

The most prominent is *Away from Her*, Sarah Polley's extraordinary feature debut (page 66). Other highlights range from *Fido*, a hilarious satire that puts a nifty spin on the zombie genre, to *Monkey Warfare*, a playful ode to the '60s revolution that achieves an improbable fusion between romantic idealism and punk pessimism. What's exciting about these films is something that's been lacking in the austere existential style that's become a signature of English Canadian film: a sense of pure, kick-ass fun. Even Polley's old-age love story is imbued with enough lightness and wit that it never becomes a burden.

Oddly, one Canadian movie that tests the endurance of the viewer is the festival's opening night gala, *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*. It comes from Inuit filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, whose feature debut, *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner*, was an international triumph. *Journals*, which he directed with Norman Cohn, portrays the clash between Aboriginal and Christian cultures in the 1920s through the story of the last great Inuit shaman and his headstrong daughter. Like Kunuk's first feature, it conjures Arctic landscape and Inuit tradition with stunning veracity. But compared to *Atanarjuat*, which has the power of Greek tragedy, the uneventful narrative feels more like documentary than drama.

Fido has less noble ambitions, but irresistible charm. Written and directed by Vancouver writer-director Andrew Currie (*Mile Zero*), it's a genre-spliced mix of *Lassie* and *Night of the Living Dead*. Currie has grafted a sci-fi premise onto a nostalgic vision of the 1950s, rendered with the Technicolor palette of a Douglas Sirk melodrama. In this version of the '50s, the dead won't stay dead. But a company has patented a collar that makes zombies docile, and they work as domestic slaves. The story is set in a *Leave It To Beaver* household with a zombie named Fido (Billy Connolly) who becomes boy's best friend. A pregnant Carrie-Anne Moss (*The Matrix*) plays Mom; Dylan Baker (*Happiness*) plays Dad. With its high style, priceless script, and a pedigree cast sinking their teeth into a rich satire of homeland security, this is exactly the kind of Canadian movie that could break out to become an indie hit.

Monkey Warfare is a more low-gloss, low-budget escapade. But that's part of its mock new wave, retro-guerrilla appeal. Don McKellar and his long-time partner Tracy Wright co-star as former radicals from Vancouver who now live in Toronto, scavenging and selling yard-sale memorabilia of their failed revolution. McKellar's character starts flirting with a young, dope-dealing bicycle-mad activist (Nadia Litz). A triangle takes shape, and two generations of radical politics combust like a Molotov cocktail—which is the movie's all-purpose metaphor. Gleefully sampling Jean-Luc Godard, Toronto writer-director Reginald Harkema (*A Girl is a Girl*) wires the visuals and the music with an incendiary wit. And McKellar graciously gives Wright the opportunity to reveal an underappreciated talent, which is what cutting-edge, indie cinema is supposed to be all about. M

ON THE WEB: *For the duration of TIFF, read Brian D. Johnson's blog at* www.macleans.ca/behindthescene



WE'RE STALKING — DANIEL RADCLIFFE

It took 30 takes for Harry Potter to work a spell on girlfriend Cho Chang. Harry, played by 17-year-old Daniel Radcliffe, was trying to kiss actress Katie Leung in a scene from *Order of the Phoenix*. They might have felt hindered by a crew that was feeling sentimental witnessing the young wizard's first kiss. Afterward, Radcliffe insisted, "We were nervous at first, but once we got it, it was fine. My God, it was fun."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: RONIT NOVAK



SOME CULTURES BELIEVE THE SIGHTING OF THE AURORA BOREALIS FORETELLS THE ADVENT OF A ROYAL BIRTH. In this case they're right. Introducing a legend reborn. The all-new Yukon family for 2007. Their extraordinary heritage has now been taken to a new level of refinement with world class interiors, segment leading horsepower* and the best fuel economy among large utility vehicles† thanks to Active Fuel Management™. And just when you thought performance in this vehicle class couldn't get any better, StabiliTrak with Proactive Roll Avoidance technology provides a new definition of quick and confident handling. The Yukon family. As always, royalty is awesome to behold. GMC.gmcanada.com

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CONJUROR SIGNOR MARTINO levitates Mademoiselle Nita, *circa* 1900. Old-fashioned magic is coming back to movie screens too

How-do-they-do-that magic is back

Modern magic's gone 'Vegas.' Is that why these quick-change artists are so popular?

BY JAIME J. WEINMAN • When husband-and-wife quick change artists David Maas and Dania Kaseeva appeared on NBC's *America's Got Talent*, they didn't manage to advance beyond the semifinals of the TV talent contest. But, as so often these days, the Internet, not TV, had the last word on the success of performers: a video of David and Dania's act has gotten over four million hits on *youtube.com*. Millions of people are rushing to watch a magic act with no fancy special effects, no flashing lights, no talking to the audience or comic business. It's just two people rapidly changing their clothes and challenging the audience to figure out how they do it. An old-fashioned magic act has become a hit in new-fashioned media.

While old-fashioned magic is sweeping the Internet, it's also coming to movie theatres. Recently released was *The Illusionist*, a thriller starring Edward Norton as a 19th century Viennese magician who may or may not have actual magical abilities. And coming later this year is *The Prestige*, a film by director Christopher Nolan (*Batman Begins*), in which Hugh Jackman and Christian Bale play two more 19th century magicians, battling each other to see who can pull off the best tricks. Even Woody Allen played a magician in his most recent movie, *Scoop*.

These movies, like the David and Dania act, promote the concept of magicians as people who entertain audiences in a simple way by doing things that can't be easily explained. That's not the kind of magic audiences have become used to lately. In modern popular culture, magic is represented by David Blaine, whose best-known stunts are basically presented as feats of endurance, like hanging above the River Thames for weeks. Or Siegfried and (before he got mauled) Roy, with their emphasis on spectacle. Or Penn & Teller, a comedy team that happens to do magic tricks. These performers don't primarily aim to surprise the audience, instead of using lights or jokes to distract the audience from the tricks, the tricks are almost a distraction from the real source of entertainment.

The new movies, like some of the less publicized magic acts, are trying to restore the idea that magic is inherently glamorous and fascinating. It doesn't need the multimedia trappings that Las Vegas acts provide. Fred Casto, the current president of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, says that the original appeal of magic comes from the old touring magicians who "would play the vaudeville circuits and theatres all over the country. Those were the true travelling illusion shows, and that's where a lot of the classic magic came from, and a lot of the 'How do they do that?' type of attitude."

That attitude is what comes through in the reactions to David and Dania, or veteran magician Norm Nielsen, who specializes in making a violin float in mid-air. Their audiences are focused on the basic question: how did they do what we just saw them do? The arguments over David and Dania, on message boards and in the YouTube comments section, are about whether they're using wires or trick fabrics to make their costume changes.

And as the NBC and YouTube success proves, this kind of trickery isn't popular only with people who normally attend magic shows. David and Dania's main performance venue is not the Las Vegas stage but the basketball floor: they're regular performers at NBA games, and *Slate* magazine recently noted that their act had become "the league's most requested halftime attraction."

These old-fashioned illusionists, a throwback to what Christopher Nolan has called "a time when magicians were really the premier entertainers," can be found even in the home of Siegfried and Roy, Las Vegas. Casto cites Vegas performer Lance Burton as someone else who has achieved success with classic, simple tricks. "He got known with a classic act of producing the doves, and the cards, and the silks, and the candles, and the set of tails—very elegant and sophisticated. That's a little of the old school that started with Robert Houdan in the late 1800s, who put on the tuxedo and started performing."

Casto adds that nowadays, because of the expense and difficulty of taking a magic act on the road and trying new things in front of audiences, "it's not as easy to come up with the classic type of act." Not as easy, perhaps, but not impossible. And that's why when David and Dania performed on NBC, the studio audience reacted not by laughing, but by gasping. That's the old-school reaction to a magic act. M

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY



PERFORMANCE OF THE WEEK **ROBOT POP**

She's perky and likes to flash her breast-mounted lights at the crowd, but she's stalked by paparazzi, bedevilled by her own manager, and besieged by idiot music media. "B" inevitably ends up on the skids. *Bleep 'N' Grind*, which was a critical and audience delight at the recent Edinburgh Fringe Festival, is the story of a manufactured musical sensation that's perfect for the 21st century. "B" is a robot. Kind of like Paris Hilton on wheels.



A COUPLE OF REAL WHOPPERS. America is the first power in history to be hated not for its geopolitical designs but for its way of life;



those burgers and SUVS are screwing up the world in ways that old-school genocidal conquerors like Hitler could never have dreamed of

A cornucopia of anti-Americanism

It's here, just in time for the fifth anniversary of 9/11. And Americans are the worst offenders.

BY MARK STEYN

We're about to be deluged by a torrent of fifth anniversary where-it all-went wrong analysis, much of it relying on the Democratic party-media line that, in the weeks after 9/11, Bush and the neo cons managed to "squander the sympathy of the entire world."

The evidence for all that "sympathy" is hard to come by It would be truer to say, as the columnist Charles Krauthammer did three years ago, that on Sept. 11, 2001, the ceaselessly yammering anti-American chorus "gave it a rest for one day Big deal."

And, in fact, not all of them gave it a rest On the evening of 9/11, Rosemary Righter, the senior leader writer at the *Times* of London ("leader" is Brit-speak for "editorial"), arrived late at a dinner party, and found the tone, after a hard day at the office, oddly smug and triumphalist Leaving early, she gave a lift to another guest. "Rosemary," he said, "isn't it *marvellous* to think that the arrogant bloody Americans have finally got it in the neck?" Involuntarily, she braked Hard Though not hard enough to precipitate him through the windshield, alas

But it's a measure of how right the hyperpower's suffocating grip is on the planet's windpipe that even the world's big time anti-Americans are American If you trot down to your local Chapters, the front table will be an overflowing cornucopia of anti-Americanism, and only when you get your groaning stack of delights home do you notice that almost all the royalties will be winging their way south of the border The latest to join the club is John Tirman, executive director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Studies and now the author of *100 Ways America is Screwing Up the World*

Hold it right there The assumption of the title is that "the world" has some kind of coherent unified interest of its own, rather than a bunch of perpetually jostling competing interests In the case of, say, Iranian nukes, three-fifths of the UN's Big Five happen to be opposed to America's position—Russia because it's selling Iran the technology, China because it needs Iran's oil, and France because it's concluded that its national interest lies in being on the side that America's not. But, if you wiped the U S off the map, a range of new oppositional dynamics would soon assert themselves It quickly becomes clear in Tirman's Hot 100 of American screw ups—Bush, Wal Mart, Halliburton, SUVs, fast food, Paris Hilton—that he equates "the world's" interests with the usual transnational lefty pieties, albeit augmented by some aesthetic distaste at the more grotesque exemplars of American pop culture I don't want to be unfair to the chap—he's got a few less wearily predictable entries down the bottom end of his Hit Parade (No 73 New Age, No 97 John McCain, No 98 multiculturalism)—but on the whole if you'd asked a lame satirist to come up with a parody of what an Ivy League prof would list as the evils of the planet, this is pretty much it, right down to the round of applause he gives himself in his opening quotation: "During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act" (George Orwell), after which you expect something a little less cobwebbed than "blood for oil" (No. 6), "Reaganism" (17), "General Pinochet" (20), "Big Pharma" (36), "Christmas" (86)

Self loathing is a difficult sell, so you can't blame the blurbist on the back for touting the book as a "call to arms for patriotic Blue America." There is, I'm sure, such a thing as blue-state patriotism, but any book that wanted to tap into it wouldn't hire Howard Zinn to chip in with the foreword Professor Zinn is becoming something of a full-time foreworder He could probably publish an anthology of his forewords—*Fast Foreword? Foreword Is Forearmed?*—complete with a never before-published brand new foreword to the other 40 forewords Anyway, the last foreword I read by him was his one for Cindy Sheehan's book *Dear President Bush*, in which he pens this paean to the plucky underdog

"A box cutter can bring down a tower A poem can build up a movement A pamphlet can spark a revolution."

Up to a point It wasn't the box cutter that brought down the tower, but the Islamist fanatic ploughing the jet into it, and the only reason he could get away with seizing a jet with a box cutter is because the kind of big Zinn-sized coercive hyper-regulatory regime of antiquated 1970s hijack procedures had trained an entire generation of air travellers to behave like lobotomized sheep. Had jihadists with box cutters tried to "bring down" a sports bar, they'd have had the crap beaten out of them Still, professor Zinn's notion that, like the poet and the pamphleteer, the fellow slashing the stewardess's throat with the box cutter is speaking truth to power gives you a good idea of what "patriotic Blue America" boils down to In his latest foreword, the prof gets right to it in his very first sentence:

"Our country has soaked itself for a long time in the warm bath of self-congratulation It started very early, as John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, said in the year 1630 'We shall be as a city upon a hill—the eyes of all people are upon us.'"

Well, he wasn't wrong, was he? Otherwise, why would Zinn and Tirman be coming it in with their *soi disant* savage indictments? I'm often dismissed as a self-loathing Canadian, but, woe is me, there's a lot less money in it the eyes of all people are elsewhere Anyway, by paragraph two the prof's on to the burning of Pequot Indian villages in the 1630s and by paragraph three the massacre of natives in the Philippines, and by paragraph six Zinn's objecting to "the entrance of the United States into the slaughter fields of the war in Europe in World War I"—an inelegant formulation that makes it plain that it's not just that in this or that way America is screwing up the world, but that America itself is one great ongoing screw up and has been since 1630 Hard to see what's patriotic about viewing your nation as a 400-year mistake

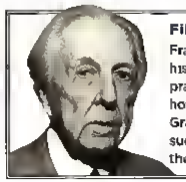
At which point Mr Tirman unveils Screw-Up Numero Uno "Altering the Earth's climate" I don't take "climate change" lightly When Tirman warns of "the freezing effects of northern Europe resulting from the loss of the gulf stream," he's right to alert us to impending catastrophe: many of Amsterdam's alienated Muslims might find it too chilly to go out gay-bashing, in the Paris suburbs, it will be impossible to keep warm, as they burnt all the cars last fall But what's his answer? A boilerplate defence of the Kyoto Protocol, a quintessential piece of transnational humbug Canada and Europe signed it and increased their greenhouse gas emissions; America didn't sign it but decreased its emissions, notwithstanding the toxic Texan's determination to destroy the planet.

Let us grant that America is a most unusual superpower. Unlike its predecessors, it is a non-imperial power, for good or ill. That presents a problem for those who insist on pretending that Bush "scares" them If you lived in, say, 1930s Poland between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, you had good reason to be scared Both powers coveted your state, and they weren't averse to killing large numbers of people to get it By contrast, barely does America set foot on foreign soil than its politicians and media are bleating about how the country needs an "exit strategy." That's one reason why the likes of Tirman have embraced environmental doom-mongering If Washington were a conventional great power, the intellectual class would be arguing that the U S is a threat to Poland or Belgium or the Gambia or somesuch But because it's so obviously not that kind of power, the world has had to concoct a thesis that the hyperpower is a threat not merely to this or that rinky-dink nation state but to the entire planet, if not the entire universe. ("We are," warns Al Gore portentously, "altering the balance of energy between our planet and the rest of the universe.")

America is the first power in history to be a threat not because of its geopolitical designs but because—even scarier—of its "consumption," its way of life It's not the bombs and tanks, it's those terrifying soccer moms in the big SUVs, it's the ozone-depleting emissions from the triple cheeseburgers Those supersized carbonated beverages are screwing up the world in ways that old-school small time genocidal conquerors like Hitler and Stalin could never have dreamed of.

Which would be a hilarious jest by posterity if it were true

But it's not. I don't know about the world, but high up on any list of 100 ways America is screwing up itself must surely be high-priced Ivy League institutions wedded to last century's progressive groupthink M



BETTMANN/CORBIS

FINALLY A BOOK ABOUT... AN ARCHITECT'S CULT

Frank Lloyd Wright was more than an influential architect: with his third wife he headed an exclusive community of live-in apprentices that behaved not unlike a cult *The Fellowship* recounts how the imperious Wright, aided by his aggressive wife and a weird Greek-Armenian mystic, created some of his greatest buildings such as Fallingbrook and the Guggenheim, while manipulating the romantic and even sexual lives of his live-in apprentices

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

MACLEAN'S

BESTSELLERS

COMPILED BY BRIAN BETHUNE

Fiction

		LAST WEEK	(WEEKS ON LIST)
1	SUITE FRANÇAISE by Irène Némirovsky	1	(19)
2	KNIGHTS OF THE BLACK AND WHITE by Jack Whyte	5	(3)
3	SPECIAL TOPICS IN CALAMITY PHYSICS by Marisha Pessl		(1)
4	THE BIRTH HOUSE by Ami McKay	3	(23)
5	BEFORE I WAKE by Robert Wiersema		(1)
6	PHANTON by Terry Goodkind	2	(5)
7	BOOK OF LONGING by Leonard Cohen	4	(18)
8	LONGONSTANI by Gautam Malkani	8	(6)
9	THEFT by Peter Carey	7	(12)
10	JPOD by Douglas Coupland	10	(14)

Non-fiction

1	STUMBLING ON HAPPINESS by Dan el Gilbert	3	(8)
2	THE LOOMING TOWER by Lawrence Wright		(1)
3	DISPATCHES FROM THE EDGE by Anderson Cooper	4	(11)
4	THE WEATHER MAKERS by Tim Flannery	2	(24)
5	HEAT by Bill Buford	7	(9)
6	HORSE: HOW THE HORSE HAS SHAPED CIVILIZATION by J. Edward Chamberlin	9	(2)
7	MARLEY & ME by John Grogan	1	(28)
8	FIASCO: THE AMERICAN MILITARY ADVENTURE IN IRAQ by Thomas Ricks	6	(2)
9	THE BATTLE FOR SPAIN by Antony Beevor	10	(3)
10	SNAKES IN SUITS by Paul Babiak and Robert Hare	8	(5)

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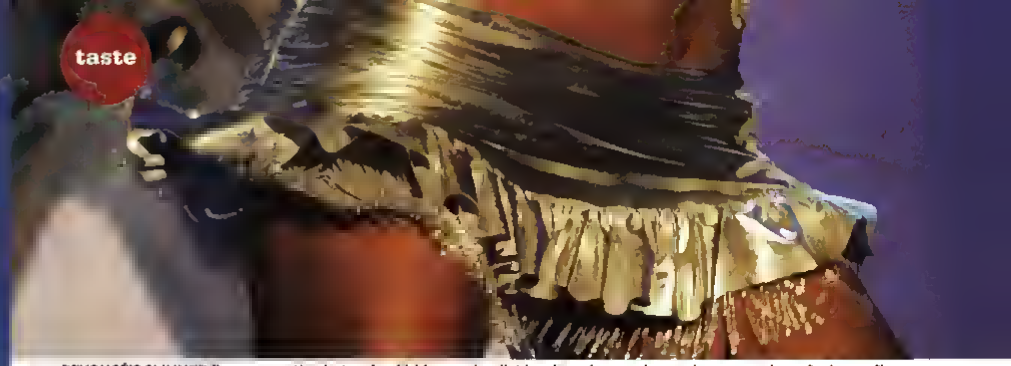
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BEYONCÉ'S SLIMMER figure come thanks to a freakishly popular diet involving lemonade, maple syrup and constant excretion

Star loses 22 lb. on maple syrup diet!

How Beyoncé got her groove back—a new book and the simple process of elimination

BY MARTIN PATRIQUIN • For a week and a half, you will eat nothing. Instead, you will drink up to eight glasses of warm lemonade, sweetened with maple syrup and spiked with cayenne powder. In addition, you will drink a litre of salt water in the morning and laxative tea in the evening. You will toil, sweat and excrete as your body rids itself of all those toxins inherent in your decadent lifestyle. You will always be near a toilet.

Tough times, to be sure, but the results are nothing short of incredible, and best summed up by the title of the book pushing this freakishly popular regimen: *Lose Weight, Have More Energy and Be Happier in 10 Days*.

Beyoncé did it, trimming down 22 lb. for her role in *Dreamgirls*. Rachel McAdams used the concoction to fit into her coach-class seat in *Red Eye*. Howard Stern sidekick Robin Quivers reportedly lost 77 lb. in between fart jokes. Now, the sheen of celebrity endorsement has made the diet—also known as Master Cleanse, Maple Syrup Diet and Lemonade Diet—a hit with mere mortals.

The Master Cleanser, the book on which the original diet is based, is No. 2 on Amazon's alternative medicine bestseller list. Many diet diehards, meanwhile, are on a (maple) sugar high. "[F]or the first time since I can remember, I am wearing size 8 jeans," wrote "Beth from Atlanta" on an Internet diet forum. "I was so happy I did a little dance."

The Master Cleanse is the invention of Stanley Burroughs, an American naturopath who developed the diet for a patient suffering from stomach ulcers. In his book, Burroughs reasoned that this patient's ailments were the result of overwhelming toxins brought on by stress and an "extremely toxic diet that consisted mostly of meat." The author credits himself with saving his patient's life. Published in 1976, *The Master Cleanser* describes how the staples of Western life—lethargy, anxiety, processed foods—have made mankind perpetually sick. Hippocrates had blood, bile, phlegm and water, Burroughs has mucus and toxins, which impede proper digestion. The 10-day fast, he says, helps eliminate both.

The Master Cleanse would likely have remained on the fringes of alternative medicine had it not been for Peter Glickman, a former chiropractic clinic director and software designer from Florida whose *Lose Weight, Have More Energy and Be Happier in 10 Days* has essentially repackaged Burroughs' book for the weight-conscious generation. "It's like hitting a reset button for the body," said Glickman in an interview from Clearwater, Fla. "People carry around a tremendous amount of stuff in them that they thought they got rid of a long time ago."

Glickman's own epiphany came while he was on the toilet several years ago, where on day 17 of a 20-day fast he had a series of what he calls semi-solid "hot eliminations." "Before that, I was cranky and irritable," he said. "After that, I felt great." According to Glickman, the diet has helped people with allergies, asthma, infertility, hemorrhoids, and lack of energy and an excess of weight—which, skeptics point out, is likely regained soon after the person stops fasting. ("People who finish the master cleanse are typically more likely to go back to a healthier lifestyle," counters Glickman. "Ninety per cent who do it have more energy afterwards.")

Michael Ricci became a fan of the master cleanse in May, when the 20-year-old Montrealer decided to try the diet because he says he "wanted to get cleaner." A boxer and wrestler, Ricci says he trained all the way through the fast and, though he didn't do it to lose weight, he didn't mind what he saw in the mirror, shirt off, 10 days later. "I looked healthier, tighter," he said. He wasn't shy about what came out the other end, either. Master Cleansers generally aren't.

Sunil Patel isn't nearly as keen as Ricci, though for more scientific reasons. An assistant professor of gastroenterology at Halifax's Queen Elizabeth Health Centre, Dr. Patel has studied these diets and says they don't do anything. "If it makes you feel better, though, what the hell." Patel suggests the benefit of the Master Cleanse lies in the patient's mind; in short, drinking two litres of spicy lemonade for days on end is one big placebo.

As anyone once infatuated with the Atkins can attest, diet fads have limited shelf life. The popularity of the Master Cleanse wavered this week when Beyoncé herself pooh-poohed her chosen weight loss program. "I would not recommend it if someone wasn't doing a movie," she told a British television show. "There are other ways to lose weight." M

FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY IMAGES



TODAY'S SPECIAL...TV DINNERS FOR BABIES

With sales volumes stagnant and revenues eroding, hyper-traditional baby-food manufacturers are waking up the marketplace with new products and ways to serve them. One innovation is "Lil' Entrées," two-course meals served on trays much like TV dinners. Among the menus are cheese-and-herb pasta, spaghetti and meatballs, and pasta wheel "pickups," for when baby wants to savour his pasta course with his hands. Who doesn't?



THE FRONT window features holograms and a touch screen. There's also a Visa swiper and a guard to make sure you don't get mugged

Now for some real window-shopping

At Polo Ralph Lauren in NYC, buy whatever you want—even when the store's closed

BY NANCY MACDONALD • It's 4 a.m., and you're walking up Madison Avenue, in Manhattan's Upper East Side. The sight of a white tennis skirt in a store window cuts through the dark. You're drawn to the light. You want that skirt. But it's the middle of the night, so you'll have to wait until the store opens at 10—when the impulse may have faded. You can't buy a skirt from a store window—unless, of course, the store is the flagship of Polo Ralph Lauren. The image of that skirt is a hologram, scrolling through a touch screen, you select the item with a tap before swiping your Visa through a reader mounted to the store's brick wall. Nearby, a security guard (there to make sure you're not mugged) stands, silent. As you turn, a message—"Thank you for your order"—flashes in the giant window. "And welcome," it should also read, "to the next generation of e-tailing."

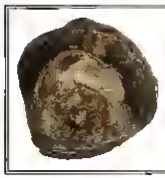
Polo Ralph Lauren is test driving this idea of literal window shopping until mid-September, making the so-called Virtual Window Shop available to impulse shoppers around the clock. It's a tie-in to the company's sponsorship of the U.S. Open, at Flushing Meadows in Queen's, N.Y., three interactive kiosks positioned at the stadium deliver service, without the smile. Depending on sales, Ralph Lauren will consider expanding the concept.

What sounds antiseptic to some is a futuristic thrill for others. The concept was inspired by science fiction, specifically *Minority Report*, Philip K. Dick's vision of life in 2054. After seeing the Steven Spielberg-directed movie—in which Tom Cruise scrolls through video footage on transparent panoramic screens suspended in mid-air, without a mouse or keyboard—Ralph Lauren's son David, a marketing executive with the company, decided to develop a real version for use in stores. Polo Ralph Lauren is not alone in adapting the concept. U.S. defence contractor Raytheon is working on a version for the military, it's hired the MIT researcher who proposed the interface to Spielberg. (He's one of several "futurists," including Vancouver artist and author Douglas Coupland, with whom the director consulted prior to filming.) And Nike is rumoured to be developing a similar retailing system.

Retailers are innovating out of necessity thanks to a plethora of options online, customers have grown accustomed to shopping whenever they want. If a glance at the galloping success of Amazon and iTunes isn't proof enough of consumer faith, the numbers should be: this spring, online sales leapt by 23 per cent over the same period a year earlier. But online shopping has not replaced conventional retail. As the computer manufacturer Dell has learned, some consumers want more than online visuals. In 2003, Dell began opening mall kiosks that allow consumers to see and order products they would previously have ordered online or over the phone.

Retailers like Ralph Lauren may be looking to marry the best of virtual shopping to another big retail buzzword of the past decade: experience marketing. James Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine wrote in their 1999 book *The Experience Economy* that we are in the midst of a major economic shift, moving from a service economy to an "experience economy." Polo Ralph Lauren's clicks-and-mortar approach, like online shopping, offers speed, convenience and the absence of pressure from salespeople—and the thrill of touch-activated images and holograms. But Ralph Lauren's needs are, in a sense, gratified more instantly than the shopper's: the system doesn't spit out Polo clothes like a Coke machine. Purchases are picked up during store hours, or home-delivered. Still, the company is staging a rich *experience*, a fantasy world that creates lasting emotional impressions.

That's something it has always been expert in executing. The genius behind the multi-billion-dollar empire was never really great design but marketing savvy, as Michael Gross has pointed out in *Genuine Authentic: The Real Life of Ralph Lauren*. Their magazine photo spreads, set in Scotland or Montauk, featuring rusted Land Rovers, golden retrievers, freckled purebreds of the human variety, and, once, the entire Princeton crew team, are positively cinematic. "All retail is theatre," says Patti Freeman-Evans, a retail analyst with New York-based Jupiter Research. At the end of the day, though, the best theatre thrives on plot, not gimmickry. The question now is, will choosing a holographic shirt from a shop window cut it—when shoppers have to wait for UPS to deliver the climax? M



PETER KRAMER/GETTY

WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT... WHALE VOMIT

Melissa Cathcart found a lump of whale vomit on a Welsh beach, and now she's $7,300 richer. Barry Williams found some worth $1,000. A mini gold rush of vomit is under way in North Wales as people scoop up the substance, more delicately known as "ambergris." Used in fine perfumes, it's worth $20 a gram. Whales throw up when they eat squid, which have hard teeth that irritate the mammals' insides. Welsh beachcombers are grateful for that.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CERTIFICATION AND SETTLEMENT APPROVAL HEARING FOR CLASS ACTIONS RELATING TO SONY BMG

This Notice may affect your rights. Please read carefully.

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE

To advise all persons in Canada, who purchased a music CD from SONY BMG between August 1 2003 and August 10 2006 which carried XCP or MediaMax software, of the terms of the Proposed Settlement and describe the rights of purchasers with respect to the Proposed Settlement.

PROPOSED CERTIFICATION ORDERS

Class action lawsuits were commenced in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec in late 2005 and early 2006 against Sony BMG and other related Sony companies. These actions allege that the Media Max and XCP software fails to disclose limits on use of the CDs, violates the privacy rights of users, creates security vulnerabilities, and is difficult to uninstall.

The Ontario class proceeding includes the claims of all settlement class members who reside outside the provinces of British Columbia and Quebec. The Quebec and British Columbia class proceeding includes all of the class members who reside in the province of Quebec and British Columbia respectively.

The Courts will be asked to certify the class actions, appoint representative plaintiffs, and define the class in part, as

> " all natural persons in Canada who purchased, received, came into possession of or otherwise used one or more MediaMax CDs and/or XCP CDs from August 1, 2003 through August 10, 2006 including the employees of Released Parties, SONY BMG resellers or distributors of the XCP CDs and MediaMax CDs, and any persons or entities that have previously executed releases discharging SONY BMG from liability concerning or encompassing any or all claims that are the subject of the Claims and the Subsequent Claims."

TERMS OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

COMPENSATION will be paid to the class as follows until December 31, 2006:

(a) All XCP class members who return their CD to SONY BMG or provide SONY BMG with a receipt indicating the return or exchange of their CD to the place of purchase will receive a replacement hard copy CD of the same title without the software, and will be able to download from the SONY BMG website free MP3 digital music files of the same album. XCP class members can then choose either of two additional compensation options: (i) a cheque for $8.40; and a promotional code exchangeable for one (1) free album download from among a list of approximately 200 available albums; or (ii) a promotional code exchangeable for three (3) of the free album downloads.

(b) MediaMax 3.0 class members who provide proof of purchase will be able to download free MP3 digital files of the tracks on the MediaMax CD.

(c) MediaMax 5.0 class members who provide proof of purchase will be able to download free MP3 digital files of the tracks on the MediaMax CD, and will receive a promotional code for one (1) free album download.

REMEDIAL undertakings by SONY BMG include:

(i) It will agree not to manufacture audio CDs with XCP or MediaMax Software in Canada, or to distribute CDs with XCP Software in Canada.

(ii) It will agree to advise the Courts if and when it uses Content Protection Software on CDs sold in Canada that has not been reviewed under the US Settlement Agreement.

(iii) It has affirmed, and an independent auditor has found, that it has not collected any personally identifiable information from consumers without consent, and it will agree to take commercially reasonable steps to destroy, at least every 10 business days, all IP addresses logged from hits made to its servers.

(iv) It waives certain provisions of the EULA associated with the XCP and MediaMax CDs.

CLASS COUNSEL FEES AND ADMINISTRATION

SONY BMG denies any wrongdoing or liability associated with the XCP and MediaMax Software. If the Settlement Agreement is not approved, the class actions will continue.

Class members will have until a date to be fixed by the Courts of the Settlement Approval Hearing to opt-out of the Settlement by sending, in accordance with the Courts' directions, a written election to do so. No class member will be able to opt-out after the date set by the court for doing so.

Class Counsel's fees and disbursements, and taxes thereon in an amount to be fixed by the court, will be paid by SONY BMG in addition to the class settlement terms.

THE SETTLEMENT APPROVAL HEARINGS

Each court will decide whether it should approve the proposed settlement as recommended by class representatives and class counsel. The hearings to decide whether to approve the settlement will be held at the court houses:

In Ontario on September 21, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at 361 University Avenue, Toronto;

In Quebec on September 26, 2006 at 9:00a.m. at 1 Rue Notre Dame East, Montreal.

In British Columbia on September 29, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at 850 Burdett Avenue, Victoria.

Class members who do not oppose the proposed settlement need not appear or take any other action to indicate their desire to participate in the settlement at this time. At court hearing the court will consider objections to the proposed settlement by class members, but only if those objections are sent in written form, on or before September 18, 2006 as follows.

Sarkis Isaac
Hewes & Partners
Chartered Accountants
3063 Walker Road
Windsor, On N8W 3R4
Tel 519-250-8663
Fax 519-250-1929
Email sarkis.isaac@hewlaca.com

All written objections must contain the following information:
(i) the objector's name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address
(ii) a brief statement of the nature of and reasons for the objection
(iii) whether the person or a representative of the person intends to appear at the appropriate class hearing in person or by counsel, and if by counsel, the name, address, telephone numbers, fax numbers and email address of counsel.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you believe you are a class member, please review and obtain complete copies of the settlement agreement and other material at http://sothachsettlement.sonybmg.ca

QUESTIONS?

Questions to class counsel should be directed in writing or by telephone to one of the following:

Quebec class members:
KUGLER KANDESTIN (Attention: Pierre Boivin)
Tel: 514-878-2861 Fax: 514-875-8424 Email: info@kugler-kandestin.com
1 Place Ville-Marie, Suite 2101, Montreal, Quebec H3B 2C6

For class members in all other provinces and territories:
SUTTS, STROSBERG Tel: 1-519-561-6246 Fax: 519-561-6203
600-251 Goyeau Street
Windsor, Ontario N9A 6V4

MERCHANT LAW GROUP Tel: 866-225-7777 Fax: 403-237-5775
340-251 3rd Avenue S. W. 203-895 Belville Street
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3T3 Victoria, B.C. V8V 1W9

HOTZ LAWYERS Tel: 416-590-7823 Fax: 647-430-8269
203-100 Upper Madison Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario M2N 6M4

Class members can seek the guidance of their own lawyers if they consider it to be desirable and necessary at their own expense.

INTERPRETATION

This Notice is a summary of the Settlement Agreement. If there is a conflict between the provisions of this notice and the terms of the Settlement Agreement, the Settlement Agreement shall prevail.

This Notice has been approved by the Superior Court of Justice for Ontario, the Supreme Court of British Columbia and the Superior Court of Quebec. Please do not direct questions relating to this Notice to the Courts. Their administrative structure is not designed to address this type of inquiry.

411514



SWEATING WITH THE OLDIES: 'With my clients, their daily routine is focused around being able to get out of bed without falling'

Fitness goal: sit down, get back up

Bob Bursach is a personal trainer whose clients are retired professionals aged 60 to 106

BY ISABEL VINCENT • "Can I bring you a gin and tonic?" Bob Bursach delivers the question with such deadpan sincerity that his client, who is 80 and straining under an exercise machine at an exclusive Toronto spa, doubles over in laughter. "Yeah, give it to me on the rocks," says the client, a slow-moving, heavy-set woman with streaked red hair, who is recovering from a tricky knee operation, and can barely walk without a cane.

Bursach's irony and sense of humour seem to serve him well in his line of work. The trim 64-year-old in neatly pressed khaki shorts, polo shirt and Giorgio Armani shades is a personal trainer for the geriatric set. The man who once helped train some of Canada's biggest sports icons (Gordie Howe, Frank Mahovlich, George Chuvalo) today works on mainly retired professionals who are between the ages of 60 and 106, and have much more modest fitness goals in mind.

"I do 'functional fitness' for people who are not interested anymore in the size of their biceps but want to be healthy, and to be able to handle their daily routine with as little stress as possible," says Bursach, who charges what many of his clients consider a reasonable $75 per hour. "In a way, it's just like dealing with athletes who need to maintain a level of fitness to deal with their daily routine according to their fitness level and objectives. The difference with my clients is that their daily routine is focused around being able to sit on a toilet or get out of bed without falling down."

Bursach, a legend on the Canadian fitness circuit, earned a degree in physical education in his native Serbia. (He was also part of an elite cadre of officers who formed the presidential guard for Yugoslavian leader Josip Broz Tito.) He arrived in Canada in 1965 and took a job selling exercise equipment at Vic Tanney's, then one of the only fitness chains around. A few weeks into the job, he rushed to the aid of a client who passed out during a workout. "At that point, people realized that you didn't necessarily need to speak the language to know what to do," he says.

Still, it does help, he admitted with a laugh. Later, when he started giving classes at Toronto's Fitness Institute, Bursach learned the finer points of English vernacular the hard way. "I remember I was doing yoga with a group of women, and I told them like this—'ladies, lie down, spread your legs and take a deep breath,'" he says, adding that it was only after a few classes that had the women breaking into nervous giggles that one of them took him aside to explain. "I was completely embarrassed," he recalls.

Today, Bursach has such a devoted following among his clients that, when one of them bought a condominium in Toronto's tony Yorkville neighbourhood, she made sure to buy an extra parking space in the building for Bursach's exclusive use. "One of the great things about Bob is his sense of humour, and the fact that he makes a game out of the exercise routine," says Henry Fliess, who is 85 and has spent the last six years regaining his mobility after an operation to remove a benign brain tumour left him initially partly paralyzed. Fliess, an architect who used to go to the gym four times a week, regularly walked the Bruce Trail and was an avid swimmer, was told he would need to use a motorized wheelchair for the rest of his life after spending four months recovering in hospital. He hired Bursach, on the advice of one of his friends. Bursach has helped Fliess build up enough strength through simple abdominal and stretching exercises to allow him to retain some degree of self-sufficiency in his daily routine. Today, Fliess walks over small grassy hills with the aid of a walker and uses a Plexiglas tube that Bursach has turned into a multi-purpose fitness tool. He still does not own a motorized wheelchair. "Bob has definitely made my life more interesting," says Fliess.

The sentiment is repeated by most of Bursach's clients, largely because he makes a point of never repeating the same exercise routine twice, the way many therapists and personal trainers tend to do. He also incorporates crutches and canes into the exercise routine. He turned one cane into a barbell, and encouraged his client to try walking without it. "He really believes in you when the rest of the world seems to have given up," said one of his clients.

"You have to remember," says Bursach, "that when you get to be a certain age, fitness no longer means competing with others," he says. "It is all about competing with yourself." M



MOST IMPROVED OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND

She hasn't made a feature film since 1979, but it's still not too late to revive a career. The 90-year-old de Havilland, nominated for an Oscar for playing goody-goody Melanie in *Gone With the Wind*, is said to be considering a comeback playing New York socialite Brooke Astor, 104, who was found living in squalor earlier this year after being allegedly abused by a relative. De Havilland would play opposite Meryl Streep.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANDY NICHOLSON

COMMENT

Pluto, Tom Cruise and other cosmic mistakes



SCOTT FESCHUK

At a meeting last week in Prague, astronomers wrote a breakup letter to our smallest planet. Dear Pluto, it's not you, it's us. They tried to cushion the blow by saying The Object Formerly Known as a Planet will serve as the prototype for a new category of "trans-Neptunian" bodies—but that's kind of like saying, buddy, you're not a Beatle anymore but, chin up, you're the best-known member of the Pete Best Five!

Downsizing the solar system won't do much to enhance the image of scientists. Most adolescent schoolkids probably reckon that the killjoy poindexters who decreed that Pluto is now a "dwarf planet" will soon try to further crush their dreams by blandly renaming the most popular constellations or, more dispiriting still, coming up with a mathematical formula capable of keeping Jessica Simpson fully clothed.

But there's no denying a certain appeal to the scientists' decision to take an astronomical mulligan—to admit it was an error to confer full planetary status on Pluto, and to make it right. This sets a good example. Let's face it: there are bad decisions we all wish we could take back—as individuals (I owned all four KISS solo albums) and as a society (you allowed me to own all four KISS solo albums without making even a token attempt to sterilize me).

Now, emboldened by the about-face of astronomers, we *can* take back those bad decisions. We have the power to turn back the clock and erase our most heinous missteps. We can agree that leg warmers were never a fad, Erik Estrada was never a TV star, and the 1980s were just one long, blurry weekend during which we chugged too many Singapore slings and incorrectly reached the conclusion that Don Johnson had charisma.

Let the astronomical community show us the way. Imagine the possibilities...

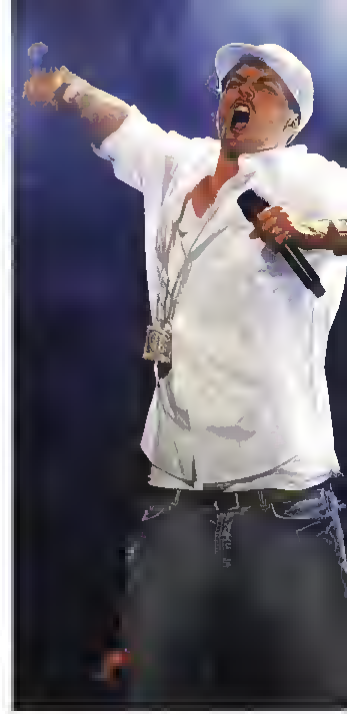
To Mr. Kevin Costner,

This correspondence serves as legal notification that, after a thorough review by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, your 1990 Academy Award for Best Direction has been downgraded to a "dwarf Oscar"—or, as it's more commonly known, a People's Choice Award.

See? It's fun to admit our mistakes—especially when they involve Kevin Costner, as so many of them do. (I spent seven bucks to see him as Robin Hood and for years afterward was forced to fight a lawsuit alleging cruelty against money.)

And it's not just ordinary folk like you and me (but mostly you) who are free to admit the error of our (i.e. your) ways. Now is the time for Paulina Porizkova to tell Ric Ocasek he's got no shot with her. Now is the time to retroactively fire Jimmy Fallon from *Saturday Night Live* and scrap Teddy Roosevelt from Mount Rushmore, replacing him with a more modern American hero like Kennedy or MacGyver.

Some big names are already seizing the moment. Consider the recent pronouncements of Sumner Redstone, who is spectacularly rich in addition to possessing other qualities, such as wealth and assets. Redstone is chairman of Viacom, which controls Paramount, a Hollywood studio with a long and fabled history of running the *Star Trek* franchise into the ground while somehow finding time to distribute not one but two *Jackass* movies.



CHRIS POLK/AP

Are there more heinous errors we can take back? Like giving Kevin Costner an Oscar, or letting Kevin Federline walk the earth?

Redstone revealed last week that Paramount would not be renewing its contract with Tom Cruise's production company. The announcement was unusual by Hollywood standards in that it made good sense. But it was also unusual because Redstone publicly stated *why* Paramount was passing. It's because Cruise has revealed himself to be, in the chairman's words, one super-giganto freaky-freak freakjob. (Fine, I'm paraphrasing.) They'd made a mistake associating themselves with Cruise, Redstone said. And now they are putting things right. For his part, Cruise declined to offer an immediate public response—but in an interview, his maniacal smirk said "Heh, heh, heh. HA! HA! Heh. Heh."

Now is the time to join with Redstone in the spirit of admitting we've been idiots. That goes for men and women, rich and poor, dogs and cats and also God. Yes, God, I'm talking to you. For on Aug. 20 didst thou stand idly by, cold and uncaring, whilst Kevin Federline, husband of Britney, made his live "rap" debut at the Teen Choice Awards. And lo, as K-Fed did raise the microphone to his nose hole, the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the performance became as though "Weird Al" were doing a parody of Vanilla Ice doing a parody of Perry Como having a seizure. And verily did I hear the satisfied cackling of Satan himself—though I suppose it could also have been David Hasselhoff, pleased to have at last been granted musical credibility, if only in a relative sense. Bottom line is that you owe us one, dude. (I mean, Dude.)

Yes, Pluto is a dwarf planet now—but it still holds a valued place in our imagination. We can still gaze into the night sky and think of it. We can still look through a telescope, search the heavens for its far-off glow and dream that one day humankind will find a way to put Kevin Federline there. M

Scott Feschuk can be reached at sfeschuk@sympatico.ca

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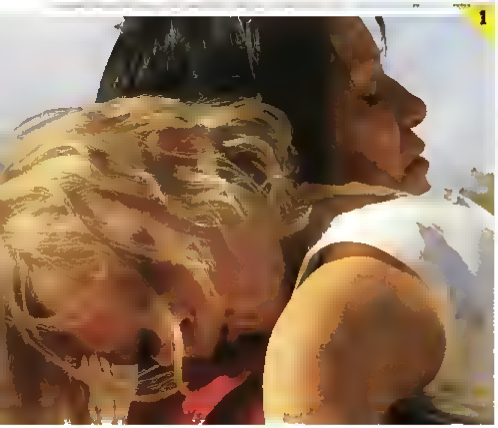


THIS FALL WE RECOMMEND...

Film's fragmented new reality, a book on an unlikely meeting and the music of simple heartbreak. It's our guide to the season's best arts and entertainment.

1 *The Canadian Hockey Atlas* 2 The Sobey Arts Award 3 *The Fearsome Particles* 4 *Absinthe* 5 *Volver* 6 *The Nine* 7 Emily Haines 8 David Jalbert 9 *Manufactured Landscapes* 10 *Orpheus Descending* 11 Justin Timberlake

FILM



1

HOMELAND INSECURITY: GOING TO PIECES

It's the new Humpty Dumpty school of social realism: the world is cracked, characters collide in the dark of their own ignorance, and tragic accidents ricochet through shattering fault lines of race and class, leaving the viewer to pick up the pieces. Last year's prototypes were *Crash* and *Syriana*. This year's model is ***Babel***, one of a new breed of Oscar contenders to be launched at the Toronto International Film Festival (Sept. 7-16). *Babel*, no doubt, will be known as "the Brad Pitt movie." And with Pitt expected to grace the red carpet at its TIFF premiere, the Babel of the world's media will converge on Toronto. But Pitt's character represents just one fragment in the movie's tectonic maze of interlocking storylines.

Directed by Mexican dynamo Alejandro González Iñárritu (*21 Grams*, *Amores perros*), *Babel* sprawls over three continents. In Morocco, an American (Pitt) frantically tries to save his wife (Cate Blanchett) after she's struck by a bullet fired at their tour bus by a peasant boy playing with an old rifle. As this random act creates an international incident, the couple remains stuck in a remote mountain village, cut off from world. Meanwhile, back in California, their Hispanic nanny illegally takes their children into deepest, darkest Mexico to attend a wedding (above). A third story unfolds in Japan, where a deaf-mute teen, scarred by her mother's violent death, flaunts her sexuality for attention. Daisy chained by plot twists, the tales focus on rifts between parents and children—and characters who transgress dangerous frontiers.

Like *Babel*, many of the movies being launched at TIFF have a raw sense of location. In India's ***Kabul Express***, a road movie shot in Afghanistan, two Indian journalists, a Taliban militant, and a female American photographer bounce through a real war zone in a 4x4. And in ***Shortbus***, New Yorkers shatter sexual taboos in a neo-hippie no man's land of hard-core promiscuity. Challenging the whole notion of homeland security, these films take us to worlds where there's no safe haven.

2

A DREAM TEAM OOWN ON THE BAYOU

Of all the heavyweight dramas premiering at the Toronto festival this month, none has a weightier pedigree than ***All the King's Men***, based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Robert Penn Warren. Sean Penn brings his greasy charisma to the role of populist governor Willie Stark, a figure inspired by Louisiana's Huey P. Long. Throw in Jude Law, Kate Winslet, Anthony Hopkins and James Gandolfini, and you've got a Dream Team taking on the Deep South. Expect this Great Depression drama to strike a contemporary chord in the wake of Katrina.

3

TOXIC WONDERLAND

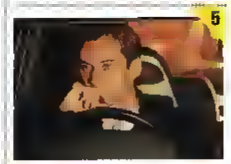
Canadian documentary filmmaker Jennifer Baichwal has a talent for making art about artists. She tracked down author Paul Bowles in Morocco and photographer Shelby Adams in Appalachia. Now, in ***Manufactured Landscapes***, she follows photographer Edward Burtynsky through China as he frames massive tableaux of industrial revolution, from the Three Gorges Dam to factory floors a kilometre long. With cinematographer Peter Mettler behind the lens, there's a fine line between toxic waste and metaphysical wonder.



4

PENÉLOPE AS THE FEMME OF LA MANCHA

No director in the world portrays women with as much warmth, wit and fidelity as Spain's Pedro Almodovar (*All About My Mother*). In his new film, ***Volver***, the flamboyant director returns to his austere homeland of La Mancha and casts Penélope Cruz as a voluptuous, hard-headed heroine worthy of Sophia Loren in her prime. She has to deal with a deadbeat husband, an abused daughter and her own mother (Carmen Maura) coming back from the dead.



5

LONDON CALLING

After the epic sweep of *The English Patient* and *Cold Mountain*, Anthony Minghella retreats to a more intimate canvas with ***Breaking and Entering***, his first original script since *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. Jude Law plays a landscape architect in London who explores the dark side of the city after his trendy King's Cross offices are burgled. With Juliette Binoche and Robin Wright Penn co-starring, urban renewal never looked so good.

6

HOT ARCTIC

After the success of *March of the Penguins*, here's another chilly documentary that should prove popular. ***The White Planet*** tracks polar bears, beluga whales and caribou through four seasons in the Arctic—as great walls of melting ice shear off. A trip to the ground zero of global warming.

7

OSCAR, OSCAR!

Christopher Guest, the improv genius behind *This is Spinal Tap* and *A Mighty Wind*, now skewers his own kind in ***For Your Consideration***. Catherine O'Hara plays a fading actress whose latest role provokes Oscar buzz. Co-stars include fellow *SCTV* vet Eugene Levy, Ricky Gervais (*The Office*) and Michael McKean. The envelope please.

TOP LEFT COURTESY PARAMOUNT

TV

1

DOWN AT THE HEELS, GOING FOR JUGULAR

Thirty years after *Network*, Paddy Chayefsky's maniacally nasty satire, television is finally comfortable enough with "mad as hell" tirades about TV to use one to jump-start ***Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*** (CTV, Sept. 17), a drama about managing a clapped-out variety show not unlike the clapped-out *Saturday Night Live*. Made by Adam Sorkin of *The West Wing*, the storytelling is fast and star Matthew Perry is a natural to play a creative sort going to pieces. Another show, ***30 Rocks*** (CTV, Oct. 14), mines the same TV-network gravel pit. Alec Baldwin oversees behind-the-scenes scrapping on a similar variety program. May the best show-within-a-show win.

2

FASHION WARNING: FRUMP DISRUPTION

A plus-size girl with bad taste in clothes goes to work in the fashion business in ***Ugly Betty*** (Citytv, Sept. 28). Derived from a Colombian telenovela, the series follows Betty Suarez's career in a world of models and runways. The pilot was a bit arch, but the title role is carried endearingly by the engagingly odd America Ferrera, who may just be the Fran Drescher of her generation.



3

STRANGERS IN COLLISION

Six people who've never met one another lead six separate lives. In ***Six Degrees*** (Global, Sept. 20), disparate New Yorkers gradually draw closer, thanks to a series of coincidences. Don't be put off by the numerical gimmick—the show starring Bridget Moynahan and Campbell Scott has solid creds, thanks to executive producer J.J. Abrams, who turned *Lost* into a phenomenon.



4

YOU'VE SEEN THESE PEOPLE BEFORE

It's this year's incarnation of *Family* and it works. ***Brothers & Sisters*** (Global, Sept. 24) is an ensemble drama of five sisters and brothers, including Rachel Griffiths from *Six Feet Under* and Calista Flockhart (*Ally McBeal*). Other sibs include a gay lawyer and a war vet with substance problems. It sounds overly familiar, but actor-producer Ken Olin (*Ahas*) maintains enough secrets and surprises up his sleeve to keep you watching.

5

CHEESE TUBE NEVER HAS A STALE DATE

Trash TV this season includes ***Dancing with the Stars*** (CTV, Sept. 12), back for another season of toe-crushing. All-new ***Celebrity Duets*** (Citytv, began Aug. 29) will pair quality singers such as Patti LaBelle with celebs not known for their tonsils. You know you'll watch it.

6

LOST IN SPACE BUT WORTH SEARCHING

Returning this fall is the unjustly overlooked, Peabody Award-winning sci-fi ***Battlestar Galactica*** (Space, air date unannounced). A souped-up subversion of the 1970s movie and TV series, it's darker, more intelligent and suspenseful. Plus there's a welcome interstellar dessert trolley of beef and cheesecake.

7

THE MERITS OF A MISERABLE START

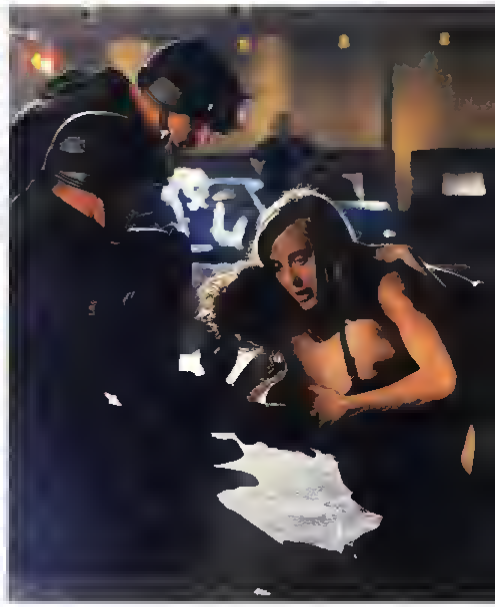
It used to be that you could make a show about people in a workplace, or a little house on a prairie. But this year, it seems you can't get a show on the air unless it starts with some horrible disaster or tragedy. The success of shows such as *Lost* and *24*, along with real-life disasters like hurricane Katrina, seem to have convinced TV producers that a show needs to start with carnage.

When it comes to destruction, no new show can match *Jericho* (Citytv, Sept. 20), which wipes out major cities in a nuclear holocaust just so Skeet Ulrich can reconnect with his father (Gerald McRaney). But some shows begin with a more modest body count. ***The Nine*** (CTV, Oct. 7, shown below), the story of the aftermath of a botched robbery and hostage situation, lets most of the hostages live, including the star, Tim Daly. And even the ones who die get to appear in flashbacks.

Other shows just start with a murder, so the hero can get framed. Donnie Wahlberg on ***Runaway*** (CW, Sept. 20) takes his family on the lam, while Taye Diggs on ***Day Break*** (Global, TBA) has to relive the day of the murder over and over, like Bill Murray with a gun.

If you can't start with death, the next best tragedy is kidnapping. Take the aptly titled ***Kidnapped*** (Global, Sept. 20), in which Timothy Hutton's son is the kidnapee. Over on ***Vanished*** (Global, already airing), an American senator's wife gets abducted. With all these abductions, the guest shot of Patty Hearst on ***Veronica Mars*** (CW, already airing) will seem anti-climactic.

There's only one person to turn to: Mr. T, star of the new reality show ***I Pity The Fool*** (TV Land, already airing). No matter who gets killed or abducted, maybe Mr. T can fix things by throwing someone "helluva far."



BOTTOM RIGHT COURTESY ABC

THEATRE



1

A SHOWMAN SERVES UP A BIG SLICE OF WOW

Two big shows are scheduled to open in Ottawa in the third week of September. There's the long running melodrama of the House of Commons, with last winter's cast back for at least one more indefinite run. And then there's the season opener of the National Arts Centre's suddenly buzz worthy English theatre, a jazz musical called ***The Wrong Son*** about a man falsely accused of killing his wife. The noirish play, set in the 1940s, will feature seven actors and seven musicians on stage. That's big by the standards of Canadian theatre. It's directed by **Peter Hinton** (above), who is also starting his first full season as artistic director of the NAC's English stage. Hinton is hoping the dark theme will impress critics and the large scale production will wow audiences. "It's a serious piece that examines a very serious subject," he says. "But it's also enormously entertaining—it has a lushness and generosity."



By hiring Hinton last year, NAC president Peter Herrndorf signalled to the theatre world that he meant to inject an element of the unexpected into what has been a respected, but not always exciting, drama program. Hinton, 44, has made his mark as an innovative director and a playwright from Montreal to Stratford to Vancouver. He's gambling on an all-Canadian season to introduce himself to Ottawa theatregoers, the first entirely homegrown roster of plays the NAC's English theatre has offered in its 37-year history. It's not a permanent stance—Hinton is already planning a Renaissance-themed program for next year, complete with Shakespeare. Still, he acknowledges the risk of starting off by putting on 11 Canadian shows, including five premieres, without a single familiar classic to reassure subscription buyers. "I've been asked, 'What do you have for the casual theatregoer?' Quite frankly, I have nothing," he says. "I don't believe going to the theatre is a casual experience. You have to be alert. It doesn't do all the work for you."

If that sounds intimidating, Hinton swears the shows are meant to be engaging. "I'm a showman," he says. "Look, I'm opening with a musical." And unless you count the Peace Tower carillon, that's one thing Ottawa's competing venue doesn't offer.

2

ORPHEUS HEATS UP WINNIPEG'S FALL

Winnipeg's crown jewel, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, revives one of Tennessee Williams' less frequently produced dramas, the hot and sweaty ***Orpheus Descending***. Starring Jonathan Goad and Seana McKenna, who illuminated the show last year at the Stratford Festival, the admired Miles Potter directed drama moves to Toronto in the new year.



3

HI-FI HORNBY IS NOW A MUSICAL

The musical version of Nick Hornby's ***High Fidelity***—the story of an obsessive list-maker and record store owner, whose relationship has gone south—premieres in Boston Sept. 26, before moving to Broadway on Dec. 7 (part of the Broadway Across America series). In the musical, the record store is set in New York City rather than London, as in Hornby's book (or Chicago, as in the film version starring John Cusack).

4

ANYTHING FOR 10 PER CENT

When it opened last January, it was hailed by the *New York Times* as the "tangy new fable of fame and its discontents." ***The Little Dog Laughed***, by Douglas Carter Beane, is as nasty and hilarious an examination of talent agent spin-doctoring as has been seen in years. Described by one critic as an "agent morality play," it invites audiences to simultaneously hate and love a ruthless agent. *Little Dog* returns to New York on Nov. 13, at the Cort Theater.

5

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE WITH CATTLE CALLS

You should see it just for the production's backstory alone. Andrew Lloyd Webber's new version of Roger and Hammerstein's ***The Sound Of Music*** opens on Nov. 3 at the Palladium theatre in London's West End (which he owns). The role of Maria will be chosen in a reality series (currently airing on the BBC) called *How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?*, in which Webber—one of the most influential people in British theatre—serves as a judge. (Thus after Scarlett Johansson declined the role, launching a tit-for-tat with the multi-millionaire composer.)

6

AN UNCLEAN SEARCH FOR JOKES

Nominated for a 2005 Pulitzer Prize, ***The Clean House*** by Sarah Ruhl opens in two cities at Regina's Globe Theatre on Sept. 13 and at New York's Lincoln Center Oct. 5. A depressed cleaning lady doesn't want to clean, she'd rather discover the world's funniest joke. Disaster ensues.

7

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL MEETS PROUST

Part cabaret, part circus, ***Absinthe*** is inspired by the hallucinogenic liqueur that beguiled Proust and Gaugin. Playing until Oct. 1 at New York City's South Street Seaport, the acclaimed show features a knife-juggler who works his trade disturbingly close to spectators, a sopping wet young buck spinning over head, sprinkling patrons with his bath water, sword swallowing and a breathtaking soap-bubble sculptor.

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RECOMMENDED

MUSIC



1 PLEASURES OF THE SIMPLE KNIFE



The great strength of ***Knives Don't Have Your Back***, the new solo CD from Metric's lead singer **Emily Haines**, is the stripped-down simplicity of the arrangements. The album includes horns, strings and Haines on piano, but the focus is her haunting voice and thoughtful lyrics. It's not as edgy, but the album (out Sept. 12) is as powerful as anything she's done with Metric—arguably Canada's best indie rock band. And yet, she only decided to show this more vulnerable side after she was urged by friends and musically inspired following the 2003 death of her father, Paul, a famed Montreal poet and jazz artist.

Although Haines wrote some of the music with her dad in mind, she was careful with song selection—afraid of being "heavy handed in any particular theme." What's left are 11 beautiful—some heartbreaking—"snapshots." Although heavily influenced by pain, Haines says *Knives* is more about longing than complaints. "Sadness and death are kind of misunderstood in their potential for positivity," she says. "All my songs are slow and sad. I just usually take them to the band and they turn them into a celebration by speeding them up and making them louder. Recently I realized that it's also fine to leave those moments as they are. You don't have to correct them. But no moping is allowed. There has to be energy no matter the mood."



2 BEN GOES SUPER-SOLO

With a wide range of influences—including his dad's record collection from the '60s and the birth of his first son earlier this year, indie rocker **Ben Kweller**'s self-titled fourth album (out Sept. 19) proves what his fans have known about the 25-year-old Texan all along: he has a great pop sensibility. And Kweller took the project to an even more personal limit by singing all the vocals and playing every instrument on the album.

3 SO WHAT IF YOU CAN'T DANCE TO IT?

On ***So This is Goodbye***, the Junior Boys have taken a more relaxed, melancholy approach to the music, compared to their critically acclaimed 2004 debut, the dance floor favourite *Last Exit*. Although the duo (Jeremy Greenspan and Matt Didemus from Hamilton, Ont.) do offer electro-pop on their newly released disc that harkens back to the 1980s—they even include a terrific cover of Frank Sinatra's *When No One Cares*—it's done with a very modern, stylish flair.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

4 CAMERON'S BOY TOY IS ALL GROWN UP

Justin Timberlake is making it incredibly easy for us to forget that he was ever in a boy band. With help from legendary hip hop producer Timbaland, *FutureSex/LoveSounds*—the follow-up to Timberlake's 2004 mega-selling solo debut *Justified*—will become the hottest fall release when it lands in stores on Sept. 12. And with Michael Jackson washed up, this disc could cement Cameron Diaz's boyfriend as the new King of Pop.



5 DON'T MESS WITH THE QUEEN B

He vehemently denies them, but the rumours that **Beyoncé**'s father/manager is trying to delay the Sept. 5 release of ***B'Day*** because she wouldn't let him oversee its production are only adding to the buzz around the star's second solo CD. Plus, there's pressure from a musical rival, former Destiny's Child bandmate LeToya, who's topped the charts lately. But Beyoncé is flooding the market with two singles at once—*Deja Vu* and *Ring The Alarm*—ensuring her throne.

6 KILLERS TAKE CUES FROM THE BOSS

They proved their pop rock prowess in 2004 with *Hot Fuss*. Every single seemed to become a catchy anthem. Now, using Bruce Springsteen as their inspiration, **The Killers** are getting a bit heavier in their sound with ***Sam's Town***, which will be in stores on Oct. 5.

7 A JAZZ GENIUS TO CALL OUR OWN

Maybe once a decade is there a Canadian jazz musician as ready for wider recognition as Toronto pianist **David Braid** is now. At 31, he's a bright player, a tuneful and surprising composer, and he's so busy you won't have trouble finding him. After an Asian tour in September, he'll release ***Live from the Senator, Vol. II***, at Toronto's Sopra lounge on Oct. 10-13; then he'll undertake a nationwide tour with saxophonist Mike Murley, Oct. 27-Nov. 10.

RECOMMENDED

VISUAL ARTS

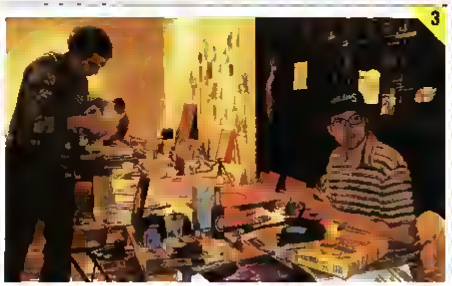
1 FROM GROCERIES TO FINE ARTS

Canada's answer to the Turner Prize, the biennial **Sobey Art Award** has shortlisted works by artists from across Canada, including Steven Shearer, Annie Pootoogook, Janice Kerbel, art trio BGL and Mathew Reichertz. These finalists for the $50,000 award are on show at Montreal's Musée des beaux-arts from Oct. 17 to Jan. 7. The award will be announced on Nov. 7.

2 OUT OF THE PAST: A QUEBEC GIANT



It's the first major exhibition since his death in 1942. The National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa will mount a retrospective of pioneering Quebec artist **Clarence Gagnon**, a supreme practitioner of romantic naturalism, which faded from vogue with his passing. The show includes 200 examples of his works.



3 PARTY TILL YOU PASTE: GROUP COLLAGE

Paul Butler started his "Collage Parties" as a mechanism for breaking out of the monastic confines of the artist's studio. The 33-year-old Winnipeg artist, whose June solo show at New York's White Columns gallery reflected the Winnipeg art scene's growing international clout, started inviting the public to galleries across North America and Europe, where drinking, carousing, and cutting-and-pasting ensued. In the end, fresh art got hung.

But lately, Butler has made his parties invitational instead of open. "I use the Collage Parties as my studio, but I was having to play host all the time," he explains. This week, Butler and invited guest artists are making collages at Montreal's Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, with results on view until Oct. 14. From Sept. 7-13, Butler and colleagues will tear things up at Calgary's Illingworth Kerr Gallery, with results on view to Oct. 21. "I think of it like a potluck," Butler said. Do ordinary people ever surprise him with their work? "Absolutely. Kids are really amazing."



CLINT MCLEAN

4 NO-MONEY-DOWN HOMES

Tokyo artist **Kyohei Sakaguchi** has documented architecture created by the homeless using scavenged materials. The Vancouver Art Gallery hosts portions of his archives and his construction of a similar "zero yen" house, beginning Sept. 23.

5 AVEDON'S PRIVATE COLLECTION

His own pictures are collected around the world, but the late fashion photographer **Richard Avedon** was himself an avid collector of other people's work. Now up for sale, works by Diane Arbus and others are on show in New York City's Pace/MacGill Gallery until Sept. 13.

6 A MANLY ART OF PAINTING

Unjustly overlooked, portraitist **Patrick DeCoste**'s new show "Below the Belt" features men fighting, hunting and otherwise competing. His acrylic works recall Victorian photography in style and attention to craftsmanship. At Toronto's Spin Gallery until Sept. 24.

BOOKS



AP

1 MISTRESS OF THE HISTORICAL MOMENT

"There are occasionally these nice episodes that you can use to look at a whole lot of bigger issues," Margaret MacMillan says. It was certainly true of *Paris 1919*, her surprise bestseller about the peace negotiations after the First World War. Now, in ***Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World*** (Random House), MacMillan recounts the 1972 visit of a staunchly anti-Communist president that ended the isolation of Mao Zedong's Communist China. "I've always been interested in the ways in which, at certain moments, individuals can make history," says MacMillan, who will leave her post as provost of Toronto's Trinity College next summer to become warden of Saint Antony's College, Oxford. (Any regrets about leaving? "Of course. I'm Canadian.")

There's high diplomacy in the new book, but also awkward social moments. At one point, the Nixons get dragged off to attend one of Madame Mao's revolutionary operas. "They are truly awful," MacMillan says of the spectacles. There's a Canadian angle, too. "Canada gave the Chinese a pair of beavers as a present," she recalls. Transport was a problem. The beasts wound up making the trip in the bathroom of an Air Canada jet. "You could hear splashing noises. I don't know whether they were building a dam or what."

2 SECRET LIVES OF EVERYDAY DRINKS



Another of those fascinating studies of the great impact of familiar things, *A History of the World in Six Glasses* (Anchor Canada) reports on civilization's enduring drinks: beer (pharaohs were buried with it), wine (Romans were the first wine snobs), spirits, tea, coffee and cola drinks. Author Tom Standage explains how coffee helped win revolutions, while rum fuelled Napoleon's defeat.

3 LIFE, WITH THE SCARY BITS

A desperate executive and his too-perfect wife cope with a son damaged by war. With *The Fearsome Particles* (McClelland & Stewart), Trevor Cole has written an *Ordinary People* for the 21st Century.

4 LOOKING FOR A LINK: HIP HOP AND GUNS

Just as feminists described pornography as the evil parent to rape, law-and-order advocates blame hip hop for gun crimes. In ***Enter the Babylon System. Unpacking Gun Culture from Samuel Colt to 50 Cent*** (Random House Canada), Rodrigo Bascuñan and Christian Pearce, the creators of the urban culture magazine *Pound*, take apart humanity's long-standing fascination with guns and the much newer hip hop music culture. They ask whether there really is a connection.



5 THE GEOGRAPHY OF OUR GAME

Gordie Howe, Eddie Shore and Wendel Clark never played together, but they all shared formative backgrounds in the same part of Saskatchewan. Stephen Cole plots our hockey heritage by latitude and longitude in ***The Canadian Hockey Atlas*** (Doubleday Canada), a boys of winter gazetteer with entries on 1,000 players.

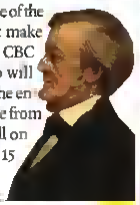




PERFORMANCE

1 ENJOY SIEGFRIED WITHOUT ANY TIGERS

Richard Wagner's ***Ring Cycle***, the Olympics of opera, is the much anticipated inaugural event at the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto and the can't miss performance of the year. Can't make it to town? CBC Radio Two will broadcast the entire cycle live from the new hall on Sept. 12, 13, 15 and 17.



2 LOVE GRUNTS AND VIOLENT RUSSIANS

The grunting passion of renowned conductor **Valery Gergiev** (known to have raised screams from his audience) promises a blazing ride through Tchaikovsky's explosive ***Piano Concerto No. 1*** and Shostakovich's ***Symphony No. 8*** when the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra presents Western Canada's classic event of the season on Oct. 18. Gergiev's handling of the symphony should be particularly wild as it's among the Russian composer's most complex, and violent, pieces.



3 IS THE PUMPKIN GONE, TOO?

The **Calgary Opera** opens its season with a made-in-Alberta performance of Rossini's ***Cinderella*** Nov. 18. It's the old story of seeing beyond the surface of things and finding true love, but with a few tweaks. In this version, a stepfather replaces the evil stepmother, and the fairy godmother is replaced by a curious prince who disguises himself as a valet.

4 FROM BIG BIRD TO PAGANINI

The pride of the Prairies, Brandon-born violinist **James Ehnes** joins the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra at the acoustically perfect Francis Winspear Centre Oct. 14 in the Alberta capital. Now 30, Ehnes was inspired to play as a child when he saw Itzhak Perlman playing the violin on *Sesame Street*. Like Perlman, Ehnes is one of the few musicians alive who can really do Paganini justice. He'll be performing the Italian virtuoso's ***Violin Concerto No. 1***.

5 SMOOTH, EARTHY

Legendary trumpeter **Wynton Marsalis**, along with his Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, will join the New York Philharmonic under the baton of **Bramwell Tovey**, conductor and musical director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Marsalis is known for sophisticated jazz, Tovey for his earthy classics. Together they will present a night of Tchaikovsky and Ellington at the Lincoln Center in New York City.

6 TRE FINALE TO MOZART-MANIA

Montreal's **Orchestre Metropolitain**'s celebrations of the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth climax on Oct. 26, 27 and 30. The orchestra's conductor/boy-wonder **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** and Quebec pianist **David Jalbert** will perform Mozart's ***Piano Concerto No. 20***. Alone among Mozart's 28 piano compositions, it's written in a minor key, a dramatic foreshadowing of Beethoven's writing. It's teamed with the orchestra's first performance in a multi-year program of Haydn's "London" symphonies.

7 A STAR PUTS MONTREAL BACK ON THE WORLD MUSICAL MAP

Finally, the years of stagnation and strife that ensued when conductor Charles Dutoit went away mad in 2002 are over. The Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal has a new maestro and he's worthy of its power and ambition. And for a bonus, he's a hottie.

Kent Nagano is leaving assignments with orchestras in Berlin and Los Angeles to become Canada's finest symphony orchestra's eighth artistic director. (He's also taking on the Bavarian State Opera.) Slim, mop-haired, earnest and passably bilingual, the 55-year-old Californian was lured by the orchestra's high-powered board (chairman: Lucien Bouchard) with one mandate: put Montreal back on the world's musical map.

He's wasting no time. The Sept. 6 season opener is the sold-out event of Montreal's fall season, and by choosing Beethoven's ***Ninth Symphony***, Nagano is hinting at his eagerness to establish the credentials of the man and his band. The program also shows Nagano's fondness for contemporary works, including Charles Ives' ***The Unanswered Question*** and a symphony by the reclusive Russian, Galina Ustvolskaya. Later Nagano concerts will include Schubert and Schumann on Sept. 11 and 12, Schoenberg's massive ***Gurre lieder*** in November, and Christmas songs with the soprano Renée Fleming on Dec. 19. Fleming is nearly the season's only marquee soloist, ensuring the spotlight remains on the new conductor. M



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THE END

CHAD MARJAN

1980-2006

He loved to ride fast, horses and cars. 'He was always saying "Get up! Stop crying. Don't be a baby."'

Chad Marjan (a.k.a. Buddy Jack Anderson) was born in Saskatoon on Nov. 5, 1980, the only son of Glenn and Holly Anderson. He was an energetic child, the type who hated school and everything else indoors. He drank carrot juice and apple juice, not because he enjoyed the taste, but because he was allergic to dairy products. When he was eight, his parents divorced and his mother remarried. After the wedding, Buddy adopted the surname of his stepfather, Bill Marjan. He also changed his first name to Chad, although nobody quite remembers why. "He just always liked that name," his mother says.



Chad and his younger sister, Elizabeth, moved with their mother and new stepfather to an acreage near Martensville, a rural community just north of Saskatoon. When he was 14, he bought his first horse—a red roan Appaloosa named Chief. Chad loved to ride fast, and it was only a matter of time before he was barrel racing at local fairs. During summer afternoons in the backyard, he would often tie an inner tube to the back of his horse and drag his little sister through the grass. "We used to do that all the time until I ended up hitting a fence post," she recalls. "He was always a risk-taker. I wouldn't be as tough as I am now if it wasn't for him. He was always the one who said: 'Get up! Stop crying! Don't be a baby!' "

Chad loved cars almost as much as horses. Before he even had a driver's licence, his stepfather bought him a pickup truck—a 1960 Apache half-ton. Like his horse, Chad drove his new car as fast as it would go. "He loved to push the limits," says Ryan Morrison, his best friend. When he was 18, Chad was driving his Ford pickup down a gravel road when the axle snapped. Shaken, he vowed to never again buy a Ford. His bedroom walls—or at least the parts not covered with Toronto Maple Leafs posters—became a shrine to Chevrolet. He owned so many Chevy ball caps, his family says, that he could have worn a different hat every day of the week. "He felt that Fords were bad luck for him," his mother recalls. A year later, however, Chad put aside his hatred and bought another Ford, a red and gold F-150 pickup with a price tag too low to pass up. He was behind the wheel, spending time with some friends, on Oct. 22, 2000. "They were drinking and partying and they thought it would be fun to go drive the truck around in a field," his mother says. None of the four men was wearing a seat belt, and when the truck flipped, Chad smashed through the back window.

His brain bled so heavily that his head swelled. "You couldn't even see his eyes or nose or mouth because it was so swollen," Holly recalls. Six weeks later, when Chad awoke from his coma, he was unable to move the left side of his body. He was hemiplegic, the result of a stroke. His family struggled to re-teach him the basics of life. How to eat. How to go to the bathroom. How to talk. It was a daunting task, but Chad was determined to walk again. Physiotherapists—first at Saskatoon City Hospital, then at Star Rehab Centre—worked for years to improve his balance and muscle control, stretching his arm and leg and spending untold hours in the pool. "He was so positive," recalls Kim Closson, Star Rehab's manager. "He went from being in a wheelchair to walking with a cane." He even mustered enough strength to ride his horse again. Last year, Chad volunteered to tell his story to teenagers. "Think about what you're doing," he would often say. "Don't be stupid."

On Thursday, Aug. 17, Chad began his day as always. He woke up at 9, drank a large glass of water, then walked a quarter-mile on his treadmill. After a bowl of Vector cereal and a cigarette—Canadian Classic Light—he took a shower and fed his dog, K-9. He spent much of the afternoon tinkering with his 1966 Chevy II, a car he one day hoped to drive if his health allowed it. That night, after dinner and another ride on the treadmill, he steered his motorized scooter down the driveway, K-9 by his side. Their destination was a gas station a few kilometres away, where Chad often bought smokes and a Pepsi and chatted with the clerks behind the counter. It was nearly dark when he headed home, careful to keep his scooter on the right shoulder.

Shortly after 10 p.m., Holly, who knew her son's routine as well as anyone, left the house to bring him a jacket. In the distance, she saw another set of headlights slowly approaching. "Every once in a while, Chad would bounce up," Holly recalls, saying it looked as if the driver was purposely rear-ending the scooter. Moments later, Chad was lying underneath the car—a Mercury Grand Marquis built by Ford Motor Company. He died three hours later. Police are now investigating reports that the unnamed driver, who was fined $140 for not having a valid driver's licence, threatened Chad during an argument at the gas station.

BY MICHAEL FRISCOLANTI



GIVENCHY

PRESENTS



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